

1926

THE SATURDAY REVIEW

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No. 3682. Vol. 141.

22 May 1926

[REGISTERED AS
A NEWSPAPER] 6d

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES.—The subscription to the SATURDAY REVIEW is 30s. per annum, post free. Cheques should be sent to the Publisher at the above address. The paper is despatched in time to reach subscribers by the first post every Saturday.

NOTES OF THE WEEK

THE post-strike situation, which when we wrote last week was so obscure, cleared itself in the course of the week-end and by Monday conditions were almost normal. Rumours of wage reductions proved false, the difficulties standing in the way of a resumption of work being due to stipulations by employers regarding non-financial terms of re-engagement. These terms were for the most part perfectly just, though they must have astonished and shocked many of the men and brought them to a sharp realization of where they had been led by their leaders. The more one reads and reflects on the situation the more it is brought home to one how complete and humiliating was the surrender of the T.U.C.

The full terms of re-engagement in most of the trades affected have been printed in the Press. In particular those of the Railway Companies were severe, though justified. Never can union leaders have eaten so much humble pie in public as Messrs. Thomas, Cramp, Bromley and Walkden. It was the most abject surrender. Mr. Thomas made a pitiful attempt to bluff out his capitulation in a ridiculous speech about the employers having done "the big

thing." After this we shall not be surprised to see him severing his connexion with the N.U.R. Men who went back to work on Monday and found they would only be taken on "as and when required" will have tales to tell their wives and children of the benefits of a general strike to the working classes.

The reasons which decided the T.U.C. to call off the strike with such dramatic suddenness have since become fairly clear. There is little doubt that the Astbury judgment weighed heavily with them, and, together with Sir John Simon's speech, made them fear legal actions for damages. Equally operative in helping them to a decision was consideration of the consequences of calling up their "second line." Either there would have been a poor response, and the movement would have cracked, or there would have been a solid response, in which case the consequences might have been appalling. For the "second line" included postal, telegraph and telephone hands, and power and light workers, and without any of these services the country would indeed have been plunged in chaos. The T.U.C. would have had no means of controlling their own branch committees, and disorder might have followed such as would have made the whole situation definitely revolutionary. These considerations, coming on top of a certain

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exasperation at the *intransigence* of the miners were enough to bring the T.U.C. quickly and heavily down on the side of surrender. It is at least to their credit that they chose to save their country rather than their faces.

We discuss in a leading article the party-political reactions of the strike. The legislative consequences, if any, are still occupying the attention of the Government, who are said to be contemplating a Cabinet Committee to conduct a full investigation into the whole subject of trade union law. There will certainly be no oppressive legislation while Mr. Baldwin is Prime Minister, but certain reforms are necessary and overdue. Perhaps the most important is that in regard to the farce of the "secret" ballot, with which we deal at length in another leading article. Other matters concern picketing and the non-liability of unions for torts. There will almost certainly be a movement for repeal of the Trade Disputes Act, but any action likely to cause serious ill-feeling among the workers must be carefully avoided.

Since the strike was called off the country has resounded with the shouts of self-congratulation. Surely they have been overdone. We got well out of a mess, but why did we ever get into it? If Mr. Bromley's "Never again" means anything it must be taken to mean everything. We have always maintained that the strike need never have happened, and now that it is over the nation must try to conserve enough breath from the blowing of its own trumpet for the duller and harder purpose of debating measures whereby a recurrence of such an evil may be avoided.

How to change the Trade Unions from a despotism to a democracy, how to make them really representative of and responsive to the views of the rank and file—that is one of the problems bequeathed by the strike. When a few officials can order a strike without the consent of the men and in breach of their contracts and can punish disobedience by terrorism and the forfeiture of benefits, it is clear that for the wage-earners there is no bigger question than that of restoring self-government to the societies that profess to act in their name and interests. British labour has created a machine which it has ceased in any effective sense to control.

For an apt parallel to such a situation one has only to look at the politics of New York. There on paper everything is democratic enough, and not a wheel of the machine revolves without the consent of "the people." But the net result is the autocracy of Tammany Hall. So with our British Trade Unions. With their ballots and mass meetings and district and delegate conferences and so on they keep up the appearance of freedom and autonomy. But the reality is that all this paraphernalia can be, and has been, deftly manipulated by small groups of wire-pullers to further extremist doctrines, and that the average Trade Unionist is as impotent in their hands as the average New York voter in the hands of the political bosses. We shall never get Trade Unionism back to its legitimate industrial functions until its members have regained the management of their internal affairs.

How have the political leaders come out of the struggle? One man, and one alone, has enhanced his already high reputation till he now stands pre-eminent in the country. That man by common consent is the Prime Minister. He is trusted—we almost wrote loved—by all parties and classes, except the extremists of both sides, and his common-sense idealism (if we may be allowed the paradox) has set a standard for the work of reconstruction which has been widely and wisely followed. Mr. Baldwin, if he has the courage, can do what he likes with the country at the present time, and the country will trust him to do the right thing. He may not be an expert technical negotiator, but his goodwill and honesty count for much in a dispute between two irreconcilable parties like miners and owners. Both sides have rejected his terms. If the worse comes to the worst he must have the strength to insist on the acceptance of his terms by both sides, and introduce legislation accordingly.

Of the others, Mr. Lloyd George has cut a sorry figure, fishing assiduously in troubled waters, though fortunately catching nothing. Mr. Snowden has "lain low and said nuffin"—in public, though rumour credits him with very useful activities behind the scenes. But undoubtedly the most lamentable behaviour of all was Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's, Leader of His Majesty's Opposition. Two weeks ago we had occasion to congratulate him on some remarks he made in the House regarding the folly of a general strike. He was only confirming then what he has often said before. But, the strike over, and a Labour candidate requiring support in a parliamentary by-election, hearken to him at Hammersmith proclaiming the gospel of Direct Action:

I have seen the Government in action. I have seen the General Council of the Trades Union Congress in action, and as a spectator in both cases, I tell you that if you are constitutionally minded, if you believe in reason, if you believe in the great work you and I have put our hands to, you would stand by the Trades Union Congress methods every time.

When a public man runs hot and cold alternately like this it is difficult to tell from which tap the fount of true conviction flows, and from which merely gallons of "eye-wash."

On Thursday the miners rejected the terms of settlement for the industry put forward by the Prime Minister. The miners had a good case to begin with and they had widespread sympathy from the nation. First they lost much of the sympathy of their allies in the T.U.C. by their uncompromising attitude—"not a penny, not a minute"—in which they persisted despite the recommendations of the Samuel Commission. Now they are losing the sympathy of the country at large. A little more reasonableness and they could probably get the most of what they demand; a little more unreasonableness, and the patience of the Prime Minister and the country may become exhausted, with results fatal to their cause. It is not so much what they ask as the way they ask for it that is so mistaken. They—quite naturally—want assurances that if they accept wage reductions the reorganization of the industry really will be carried out. This point is not made clear in the Prime Minister's terms, and we hope

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he will take an early opportunity to make it quite certain that he intends this part of the Report to be loyally and fully put into effect.

One of the most astonishing episodes of the strike was that it sent the pound sterling, for the first time in over ten years, a shade above gold parity. In part that was undoubtedly the result of the calmness and resolution with which the nation faced the crisis. A menace that might have subverted the State has worked in fact to the immense enhancement of British prestige. In part also it was due to the squareness with which the American banks played the game. They co-operated most loyally, seeking no advantage for themselves and amply repaying the assistance that London had often rendered them in times of panic. There was a moment soon after the war began when the pound rose to \$7; there were months after the war had ended when it sagged to under half that figure; to-day we may fairly regard it as re-established in its old power and authority. In that fact is registered the judgment of the world on our handling of the recent troubles.

M. Raoul Peret's abrupt return to France from London may be occasioned either by bluff or by panic. He may think that, in our fear of not seeing a settlement of the French debt, we shall reduce the annuities we expect from France, or he may, and with reason, be so frightened by the further collapse of the franc that he wishes to be in Paris to hunt for additional excuses for, and explanations of, its fall. On the whole we imagine the French Finance Minister desires a debt settlement even more than we do, for the simple reason that he wants above all to obtain further loans which might restore some measure of stability to the franc. On a previous occasion a foreign loan enabled M. Poincaré to ward off the financial crisis, but it is not at all certain that another loan now would have the same effect. We see nothing but more drastic financial measures which will restore confidence in the currency of France, and such measures are those which the present Chamber is least likely to adopt.

The Committee which has been sitting in Geneva to study the reorganization of the League of Nations Council has been surprisingly successful in clarifying a situation which, two months ago, appeared almost insoluble. This success is doubtless due in great part to Lord Cecil's tact, but it is due still more to the fact that the British Government has taken the lesson of the March Assembly to heart and has realized that it must oppose any and every claim which might endanger Germany's entry. The discussion on permanent seats has been postponed for some weeks, but it is already clear that no other country supports Spain and Brazil in their claims to be treated as Great Powers, and the postponement has only been made to enable them to ponder on their isolation. Furthermore, the Committee takes the view, put forward in this REVIEW two months ago, that there is nothing to prevent the Assembly from deciding that non-permanent members shall take their seats on the Council as soon as they are elected. Thus Brazil, or any other obstructing State, could be replaced in September instead of in January only, and Germany could be brought into the League without further delay.

The Committee has made other recommendations of importance. Most of the smaller States feel that they should have some chance of sitting on the Council and have strongly supported a system of rotation for non-permanent members. At the same time, there are one or two countries whose political situation should entitle them to some form of semi-permanent membership. Therefore there are to be nine non-permanent members instead of six, and, of these nine, three will be elected each year for three years, after which they will not be re-eligible for a similar period, unless the Assembly decides, by a two-thirds majority, that one or more of them shall remain in office for a further period of three years. In ordinary circumstances such a provision should satisfy Spain and Brazil. But even should they remain obdurate, there can be no doubt that their resignation from the League, however regrettable, would not be too big a price to pay for the admission of Germany.

We know nothing whatever about the three Englishmen who have been sentenced to long periods of imprisonment for espionage in France, but such evidence as has appeared in the newspapers shows that, if, in fact, they are spies, they are very clumsy ones. Only a week or two ago some scandal was caused by the imprisonment in French Northern Africa of a young territorial officer on holiday, and one cannot but find a certain similarity between the present French spy mania and that which obtained in Germany immediately before the war. One is reminded of the famous Trench and Brandon case. It has been asserted in the present instance that the three prisoners belonged to the British Intelligence Service and, even if this were true, which we very much doubt, we feel it would have been wiser for the French to make little of the case. These frequent arrests of British subjects on charges of espionage will scarcely tend to strengthen the conviction in Germany, or anywhere else, that the military and political links between Great Britain and France are as strong as Paris would wish people to believe.

A few years ago one could hardly enter a building in Poland without being faced by a portrait of Marshal Pilsudski. He was never popular with General Haller and other members of the officer class, but he was beloved by the private soldier and the peasant. It is this popularity which has enabled Poland to produce a military dictator who represents Radicalism rather than reaction. General Haller and his supporters in Posnau and Cracow may still not give in without a fight, but we doubt whether they will be able to imperil the stability of the new regime. This stability will be threatened soon enough by the very critical financial situation. In this country there is a great deal of sympathy for Marshal Pilsudski and all that he stands for—although it is absurd, of course, to suggest, as some German papers have done, that his *coup d'état* was engineered in London owing to his hostility to Russia—but confidence in the *sloty* is not so great that Poland can indulge in revolutions without serious consequences to her exchange.

PARTIES AFTER THE STRIKE

THE first (and probably the last) general strike in England cannot fail to leave its impress on parties and reputations, and though we are still too near the facts to see them in proper perspective, and the event is not complete until the coal lock-out is also settled, the temptation to speculate on the future is too strong to be resisted. One conclusion seems to be certain. The strike has greatly enhanced Mr. Baldwin's reputation and made his position in the Party impregnable. It would be affectation to deny that Mr. Baldwin has had his critics within the Party. Some missed in him the cleverness and agility of mind to which he has never laid claim; others accused him of mere weak sentimentality towards Labour aspirations. He has answered both sets of critics by his conduct in the strike; indeed, what were imputed to him as faults have helped both him and the country. His declaration at the beginning of the strike that it had broken his policy in pieces, but not his ideals, not only strengthened the country in its resolution to accept nothing less than unconditional surrender in the general strike, but by sustaining the note of humanity lessened the bitterness of the struggle, hastened its end, and, let us hope, helped to close up the breach in our national unity. He may have made mistakes. But whereas the mistakes of a clever man injure him, those of the straight and honest man may help him to win sympathy and friends. His balance, his justness and moderation in victory, and his generosity, strong in its fibre and never flabby or sentimental, have given him a position inaccessible to mere cleverness and skill. His party is now entrenched more strongly than ever against reaction or vindictiveness, or any policy which would make Conservatism the party of one class in the State. To say that the Party is united in a constructive policy towards labour questions would be to exaggerate; but at any rate it is more united after than it was before the strike.

The Labour Opposition has suffered severely in credit, but it is not easy to forecast the ultimate effect on its fortunes. Ten years ago it was true to say that the trade unionist element in the party was that which made for moderation, and the trade unionist in alliance with Socialists was once compared to poor Barnaby Rudge at the head of the Gordon rioters. It was thought that if you took the Socialists away from the Labour Party, what was left was a pure *bourgeoisie*, capable of attaching itself, according to circumstance, to either of the two older parties. That is no longer true, and the moral of the general strike is that the extremists are not only in the unions but in a position of some authority in the unions. What has happened in the unions is that the extremists—communists, syndicalists, and the like—have captured the offices in the local lodges and have sought to exploit economic discontents in the interests of a political theory. The course of the strike and the readiness of the final surrender have shown that these men were not numerous; and when the moderates chose to assert themselves, they collapsed. Mr. Thomas has asked us to admire the moral courage with which he and Mr.

Bevin called off the strike, but that courage would have been better shown in preventing it. Had Mr. Thomas and Mr. Bevin and the others who profess that they never believed in a general strike either resisted it or resigned if they were overruled, the failure of the strike would have put them in an exceedingly strong position. As it is, not even Mr. Thomas can have it both ways. He is deeply discredited alike with the other two parties, with his own moderates, and with the extremists, and the same holds good, more or less, of other trade unionist leaders.

The one section of the Labour Party that comes out of the strike with any sort of credit is the middle class Socialists like Mr. Snowden. All trade unionists are both resentful and depressed, casting round for some one whom they can blame. The immediate result of the strike has been to strengthen the intellectual Socialist element in the trade union party at the expense of the trade unionist straddlers and extremists. But if there were a general election to-morrow, the Labour Party would be lucky to come back half as strong in numbers as it is now. The best thing to hope for would be the formation of a genuine and independent trade unionist Right, purely opportunist like the American labour men, interested in economic progress and not in political theories. In that case the academic Socialists and the revolutionaries might be left to cancel each other out. But such a policy would require men of more courage than the Labour Moderates have yet produced, and the future development of Labour politics must depend very largely on the course and duration of the coal dispute.

Some members of the Liberal Party—notably Lord Oxford, Lord Buckmaster, and Sir John Simon—have been advanced in reputation in the last two weeks; Sir John Simon in particular by his speech on the illegality of the general strike exercised a real and very wholesome influence on events. But none of these men could bring about a revival of Liberalism in the country; the one man who might have been capable of that emerges from the stoppage greatly damaged in reputation, both among Liberals and in the country generally. Mr. Lloyd George in his tactics has sometimes shown a caution that has laid him open to the reproach of timidity. But the same man behaved in this strike like a reckless gambler, staking heavily on a final throw in the hope of recovering all his losses. For some time past he has been coquetting with the Labour Party, not without encouragement from some of its members, for the Labour Party understands his idiom and can never understand that of Mr. MacDonald. When the strike broke out, Mr. Lloyd George thought that his chance had come both of reviving the Liberal Party and of strengthening his influence in the Labour Party. He plunged heavily on his view that the struggle would be prolonged, and indeed if the strike had lasted for four or five weeks his chance might have come. The Government would necessarily have had to resort to very strong and perhaps violent measures to save the State, the reactionaries might have got the upper hand, the cleavage between classes might have deepened, and Mr. Lloyd George might then have appeared as the saviour of his country and the founder of a

new coalition between advanced Liberals and moderate Labour, with revolutionaries and communists on the one side and Conservative reactionaries on the other. The whole calculation was vitiated by the short duration of the trouble; moreover, Mr. Lloyd George not only over-estimated the endurance and conviction of the strikers, but under-estimated the extreme moral repugnance of the country to the ideas underlying the strike. In the result he has not only spoilt any chance that the Liberal Party might have had of profiting by the mistakes of the Government, but he has compromised—perhaps fatally—his own reputation alike for prescience and for political cleverness. Throughout the strike it is the simple, straightforward men who alone have emerged with any credit.

THE BLUDGEON OF THE OPEN BALLOT

IT is fortunate that in England revolutions are born and not made, that the British, by their queer instinct for political justice and their power of intelligently anticipating social development, have hitherto been able to grasp quickly the conception of good government with the minimum of physical interference. The events of the past three weeks throw up this fact in a strong light, and we have seen the bolder conspirators explode their bomb only to find that the obstruction it was intended to demolish had already been thoughtfully removed by the rest of the community. Whatever the reactionaries on both sides may have had in their minds, the bulk of the English people had long ago decided that the way to prosperity was neither by beating down the wage-earners, nor by kicking the geese to expedite the laying of their golden eggs, and they therefore resisted and resented actions on both sides which betrayed an attitude that was not only wooden-headed, but hopelessly out-of-date. Just as public opinion is against the forcing of the miners to accept any wage that would be permanently degrading, so it was marshalled even more strongly against the antiquated methods of blackmail. "The revolution" occurred long before that fateful May 3, and took place entirely on the mental plane; in that we were lucky, for the only revolutions that are valueless are the material ones. But this mental revolution is still negative; it states what should not be, rather than what should. It is now the nation's task to build up a constructive conception of industry in its relation to the State, and to the two other parties concerned in it—employers and employees. We have just seen that it is impossible for such an action as a general strike to remain a purely industrial affair—it must have a strong political significance. Industry and politics, then, are somehow related. When we further consider that the business of administering a large industry in which all the parties are interdependent for their welfare, in which in-comings and out-goings must be made to balance, and in which personal freedom is as necessary as collective service, while the wishes of all concerned in it at least deserve to be expressed, the key of the puzzle comes in sight. If the principles of democracy form the best and fairest foundations for political administration that we have so far evolved, the same, surely, should hold good for industrial administration. Democracy has not yet been adequately defined, in spite of everyone's attempts, but we understand from it that it involves the consideration of the wishes of everyone concerned

in it, as expressed through the ballot box. In applying democracy to industry, many objections would be raised, such as the impossibility of being guided by the opinions of the mass, who are essentially less expert than those whose peculiar gifts cause them to stand out above their fellows, or that one cannot manage businesses by large committees of workmen. The answer is that democracy is a compromise and a process of approximation, and that these arguments are theoretically as valid but practically as false in our political system that has worked not too badly for many years. Citizens are not pricked, like jurymen, for the office of Prime Minister, and Prime Ministers do not and cannot put measures into force of which the majority of persons disapprove. Democratic government is co-operative; there is no reason why democratic industry should not be co-operative, in the widest sense, also, and still maintain its varying grades from the chairman to the office boy. The modern employer of labour realizes this, and is willing and anxious to conduct his business on these lines, consulting with his workpeople and studying their wishes and interests so far as is compatible with the interests of the business—which is their pre-eminent interest.

But to this desirable state of affairs there is, at present, one very serious obstruction—the system of the open ballot. To-day when a ballot of, for example, the miners is taken, the Union official hands the Union member his ballot paper, and *watches him fill it up*. Sometimes, at the member's request, the official fills it up for him, but always this method carries a suggestion of ulterior influence—of intimidation even—that is contrary to every British idea of fair play, and to every democratic ideal. However the official may refrain from persuasive arguments, however sincerely concerned he may be for the welfare of those whom he represents, it is impossible to regard this open ballot as the unbiased expression of the men's opinion. But we know that officials do not always refrain from persuasion and even threats, and that they will sometimes use every means in their power to achieve a desired result of the ballot, even down to designing the question put on the ballot paper on the lines of the famous query: "Have you stopped beating your wife?" "Are you in favour of a reduction in wages?" has more than once been the subject on which a wage earner has been called upon to vote.

The result is a tyranny and a violation of every democratic principle that the people of this island would not tolerate for one moment in the sphere of politics. It puts us back in the dark ages of vote-buying, when a Parliamentary candidate used to bring over herds of Irish, keep and feed them in pens until the election day, then drive them off, half or entirely drunk, to vote for him. Instead of creating a sense of responsibility among the men and stimulating a real interest in their own welfare, it callously regards them as groups of so much vote-power that can be manipulated to attain a right or wrong end aimed at by the leaders. No wonder the men so often say that the rights or wrongs of a case are not their affair, but that of their officials whom they pay to decide such matters for them. We are a free people, and we boast that, in a civilized community, each one of us may hold his own opinion and voice that opinion through constitutional machinery. But the system of the open ballot has the effect of robbing the plain citizen of his right to freedom and consigning him to the darkness of muzzled irresponsibility in which, a hundred years ago, a few of the bitterest opponents of democracy wished to keep him. What object other than a sinister one can there be in the open ballot? But like all unjust or forceful actions, this policy defeats its own ends. It is so well known that the open ballot is a travesty of the opinions of those balloted that no one attaches the least importance to it. We are not impressed by

the enormous figures represented as being in favour of this or that strike, but by instinct look for the malicious forces behind the scenes.

If our aim were merely anti-Trade Union, there might be some comfort in this, but, strange as it may sound, there are people who are not Trade Unionists who are anxious for the happiness of their country and its wage-earners, and are eager to see both prosper and be free, neither in a state of unremitting, unsmiling toil, nor of servile acquiescence. There are employers of labour who would welcome the statement of their employees' point of view, and do all in their power to work with them and meet their wishes so far as they can possibly do so. It has not needed missions to America to prove that one willing workman is worth a dozen working under a sense of disaffection and injury; and even if employers were as black as Communist artists paint them, they are not fools and know that the right side of their daily bread is the one with the butter on. But what importance can they attach to their employees' opinions as expressed by an open ballot? If they regard it at all, they regard it as a bludgeon in the hands of their enemies and understandably refuse to embrace such an uncompromising weapon. What would the Trade Unions say if the employers in turn held a ballot of their men, and stood over them while they answered the cunningly devised questions which the employers themselves had designed? One cannot help feeling that, in such an event, those well-meaning people who sit up embroidering the word "Liberty" on red banners would not be finding much time for private study.

Probably no one generation has ever had the deciding of the future thrust upon it to the extent that this generation has, and if the events of the past three weeks represent the culmination of a mental revolution in our land, by which organized labour has learnt its limitations while gaining a proper recognition of its right to have a hearing and make a contract, it is plain that legislation must follow that will define these limits and establish these rights. Between the boundaries of protecting labour from unfair attacks and defending capital from underhand conspiracies, there is ample scope for individuals to cut out their own paths and develop as responsible members of an interdependent undertaking. If employers are to be considerate of the wishes and welfare of their employees, there must be a means of finding out what these are, but the open ballot closes the door upon any such means, and degrades the rank and file of labour by regarding it as unfit to voice its individual opinion, as a mass of mere muscle-power for which thinking is an impertinent superfluity. "Let the will of the people prevail," roars the hero of the soap-box. As politely as possible we must ask him to speak a little more quietly in order that we may hear what the will of the people may be.

THE COMEDY OF WESTMINSTER

House of Commons, Thursday

WHEN the last issue of this journal was going to press the culmination of the General Strike was still uncertain. For more than twenty-four hours after the announcement of its withdrawal rumours, first of its continuance, and then of its renewal, filled the air. The relief which was felt in all quarters at the receipt of the news of Wednesday afternoon was followed by a reaction of alarm on Thursday morning. One who left this city early on that day, in the belief that all was well, was greeted on arriving in Paris in the afternoon with the news that machine guns were busy in the streets of London. "Fama malum qua non aliud velocius ullum"—was

true when Virgil wrote it and in the intervening centuries the ingenuity of man has added a thousand wings to the flying fleet of that dangerous spirit—Rumour.

The House of Commons on Thursday afternoon was full of anxious faces. Employers, it was alleged, were attempting all over the country to reduce wages; more men were said to be on strike than on any previous day; it was reported that moderate members of the Labour Party who were against the strike before were in favour of it now, and the situation was summed up in a telegram from one of the Civil Commissioners to the effect that the General Strike was off, but that the strike in general was on.

A juster summary of the situation was contained in the words which one of the Left Wing of the Labour Party was overheard addressing to an excited constituent in the outer lobby. "It all depends upon what the Prime Minister says this afternoon." The hour fixed for the announcement was half-past six and long before that time the House had filled to overflowing. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald opened the proceedings. Throughout these days he has given the impression of a man utterly weary, physically and mentally, hopeless and sick at heart. It must indeed have been a miserable experience for one who two years ago was Prime Minister of England to attend the lengthy conferences of the Trade Union Council in the passive capacity of a spectator, unable to take a part or to say a word. The story has been told in many forms of the undergraduate driving a steam engine during the strike who suddenly realized that he had forgotten how to stop it. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has been in the position of that undergraduate during the last three weeks.

On this Thursday afternoon he was, as he has been throughout, studiously moderate in utterance and although he may have seemed ineffective to his supporters, to his opponents he appeared sincere. The Prime Minister followed him and in some twenty minutes all the doubts and fears which had begun to regather in anxious hearts were blown away like the mists of morning. He showed plainly that the difficulties which still existed in the situation were such as were inevitable and had been foreseen, he indicated that important steps towards solving them had already been taken, that reports of Railway and Omnibus Companies refusing to take men back on the same wages were unfounded, and that in the only case where employers had refused to meet the men he had himself interposed and that a meeting was now about to take place. Above all he emphasized his determination not to countenance any attempt to reduce wages or any attack upon trade unions.

From that moment the air was cleared and a clumsy attempt by Mr. Thomas to conjure back the clouds proved unavailing. In this, his last, speech on the subject, Mr. Thomas did much to forfeit the sympathy of those who had hitherto seen him as a sincere and well-intentioned man struggling against forces he could not control. He reminded the House that after the strike had been abandoned the Prime Minister had promised that there should be no vindictive action against those who had taken part in it and then read notices issued by the War Office and the Admiralty, giving preference to men who had remained at duty. "These Departments have broken the Prime Minister's pledge," he argued, concealing the fact, until he was forced to reveal it, that the notices in question

had been issued four days earlier, while the strike was still in progress. A manœuvre so obviously disingenuous did much to discredit the remainder of his speech and after a few anodyne remarks by Mr. Lloyd George, who had no difficulty in showing his colours when the fight was over, the House, with a deep sigh of relief, dispersed.

* *

The triumph of the Prime Minister was completed on Friday afternoon in an atmosphere of anti-climax. He then announced that the railway strike was settled and that negotiations in the other industries concerned were proceeding satisfactorily. He characteristically on this occasion avoided any attempt at oratory and an uninformed listener might well have imagined that it was a Company's secretary reading out to the Board the minutes of the last meeting and not a victorious statesman winding up the greatest political and parliamentary triumph on record. The two speeches that followed from the leaders of the two sections of the Opposition proved how complete that triumph was. Both had only one suggestion to put forward, which was that Mr. Baldwin himself should take part in any future negotiations between mineowners and miners. Only so, in the opinion of his two principal political opponents, could such negotiations be conducted to a successful issue.

* *

Following upon these great events, debates in the House of Commons on other subjects have failed to arouse interest. A discussion on the safeguarding of industries on Monday was unable to stir into activity even the Liberals, who are more than ever like lost sheep in the wilderness. Nor were the Labour Party more successful on Tuesday, although the subject for discussion was Unemployment, which they had themselves chosen and which seldom fails to produce opportunities for rhetoric and rant. The last item on the programme before the Whitsun recess was the second reading of the Finance Bill which, although the Budget resolutions had been passed without discussion, failed surprisingly to produce an animated debate. It is too early yet for Members to lash themselves into a fury over the Betting Tax or the Road Fund, and the announcement that no additional taxation will be necessitated by the strike has come as a pleasant surprise.

* *

On Tuesday evening there was a somewhat lively debate and an extremely lively division on the question whether the County Council should be given the powers for which they were asking to construct a new bridge across the Thames. It may well be that a distant generation, for whom our conflicts will have taken an antlike proportion, may omit to congratulate our legislators for having surmounted the difficulties of the General Strike and may merely condemn them for having in a hasty and ill-considered moment robbed their descendants of one of the most beautiful monuments of London by decreeing the destruction of Waterloo Bridge.

FIRST CITIZEN

A LETTER FROM BERLIN

THE State Opera House has just performed—almost unnoticed by the outside world—the complete works of Wagner, including the cycle of the 'Ring,' as a final celebration before closing its doors for an indefinite period. For it is to be rebuilt and reconstructed at last. The house, dating in part from the time of Frederick the Great, built from the plans of Baron von Knobelsdorff, his Minister of Public

Works, on foundations of sand in the old sandy moat of a disused fortress, now in the heart of Berlin, had been partly burnt, rebuilt, remodelled, the stage raised, the house re-seated, and so forth, and it had continued through the decades to defeat all efforts to make it an opera house worthy of its intellectual if not its architectural environment. Its stage machinery is still that installed in 1843; its outside safety ladders have been so often rearranged to meet the demands of the police for all possible emergencies of fire and panic that they are a positive danger in themselves. In the years before the war there had been a good deal of talk about rebuilding the State Opera House, in which the Kaiser, as King of Prussia, had repeatedly taken a hand. Plans were in existence when the war came, but differences and intrigues had prevented their execution. One school of opinion wanted to abandon the site of the Opera House and make the most of the vacant position on the side of the Königsplatz farthest from the Reichstag. Another urged the retention of the present site, and the building of a completely new and modern opera house upon it. They had dreams of making the Opernplatz a *Forum Friderici* by bringing the surroundings into harmony with the new scheme. But other preoccupations—notably that of war—intervened, and the opportunity was lost. The site in the Königsplatz was given over to the construction of a secondary opera house, officially called the Oper am Königsplatz (though the square is now the Platz der Republik), and the hopes of a Friderician Forum have been wilted by the perversity of those private persons who during the inflation of the mark clapped storey after storey on to the existing buildings surrounding it, and thus ruined its proportions for ever.

So the grand schemes of the architects and the town planners have had to undergo the usual municipal compromise, and the Opera House is to be rebuilt—it is hoped between now and Christmas—at a cost of 3,600,000 marks. If experience, notably in the case of the recent rebuilding of the City Opera House at Charlottenburg (once the Deutsches, and originally the master-work of Hammerstein), is any guide, the estimates will be cheerfully exceeded. The Educational Committee of the Prussian Diet virtually admitted as much when it voted the money. But Prussia can be lavish when the cause of *Kultur* is pleaded and there is no doubt that the money will be forthcoming. The auditorium is to be lengthened, and the space behind the stage is to be enlarged, with a new scene-dock and greater space for the orchestra, now uncomfortably crowded.

Considering the disadvantages of the house the technical side of the performances is a nightly miracle. Yet the Wagner cycle went without a hitch. As became the "wake" of the old house, the scene of so many brilliant gala performances and of so few adventures into the original, the fortnight was replete with anecdote. It was indeed a belated tribute to genius that Wagner should have been chosen for the obsequies. The blight of officialism that overhung so many of the Court theatres and opera houses in the pre-war Germany, stifling all progress where it could, did not spare Wagner in Berlin. Meyerbeer came in with the 'Flying Dutchman' just before the fire in 1843, but then there was a long gap, and Berlin audiences saw the 'Ring' in their own house for the first time in 1881. The Emperor Wilhelm II had no high opinion of Wagner, and is said to have characterized him as "just a common bandmaster." Someone very much out of the run of "common bandmasters" in the person of Herr Carl Muck conducted during the greater part of the cycle, and showed Berlin what could be done with its fine orchestra under the hand of one with a feeling for its full capabilities in tone and colour. Since the era of Fürtwangler it has been allowed to decline, and except on the rare occasions when some conductor of emin-

ence has dropped in to conduct the Friday symphony concerts or to give an occasional star performance—there are no galas under the drab administration of the Republic—its possibilities were only half explored. This certainly contributed to the delight of the Berlin opera public and was the main factor in carrying the whole cycle to its triumphant success. Also it afforded some compensation for the breakdown of the negotiations with Madame Jeritza. That, like most things in Berlin, turned on a matter of money. Berlin approached the matter in a fine spirit. When the opera houses had reached a decision among themselves as to how they should share the four performances it was intended she should give, they learnt that the artist cared little for money and that the fee asked by her impresario would be a mere 40,000 marks. This, it appeared, was as much as they paid Frau Barbara Kemp as the prima-donna's salary for a whole season, and anyhow they found they could not afford it. Madame Jeritza for her part escaped the observations of the Berlin critics. Severity is the order of the day in the Berlin Press and there is a manifest inclination to immolate defenceless artists at the shrine of the bitter and telling phrase. It seems to call forth an equally manifest disinclination on the part of artists to come and be killed.

During the reconstruction of the Opera House, performances will be centred at the Oper am Königsplatz, more familiarly known to the Berlin public as "Kroll," the name of one who, as the former proprietor of a private operatic venture on the site, is perpetuated in the garden café next door. It is getting ready for the summer season when the visitors from the German provinces will be content with lighter things from lesser stars.

The Berlin stage just now is dominated by an Anglo-mania very flattering to our much maligned theatre, usually pilloried here as the mirror of our native snobbery and cant. The revolutionary gods of Ernst Toller and his school, if not dead, are peradventure asleep, and with them the fashion in revolutionary drama has suffered a slump. The stage has calmed down and become a shade less bizarre, though Alfred Döblin's fantastic allegory on the sinking of the *Lusitania* was till lately puzzling the heads of less subtle disciples of the sink-at-sight theory. Comedy of manners being almost non-existent in the present German theatre, it is borrowed wholesale from England in translation, which is fortunately more or less true to text and avoids any attempt to "adapt." The Berlin stage, which has always loved Wilde, keeps 'Bunbury' (its name for 'The Importance of Being Ernest') more or less permanently in rehearsal. There are being performed at the present moment (to the evident pain and anger of the Association of German Dramatic Authors), some half dozen English plays and two Irish ones, the latter being Shaw's 'Blanco Posnet' and Synge's 'Well of Saints' (*Die Heilige Quelle*). These I did not see, the house being sold out, but I am left wondering what they made of Synge. For I saw, a little time ago, a representation of 'The Playboy,' which was an inverted delight, being solemnly interpreted as an amusing example of the jolly crime of parricide. Somehow, between the notion of the actors that an Irish peasant approximated to a Bavarian one, and of the translator that *Plattddeutsch* was the nearest thing to Synge's diction, the irony got adrift and was not recovered.

NOTICE

Readers who have any difficulty in obtaining copies of the SATURDAY REVIEW are asked to communicate with the Publisher, 9 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2. There may still be some abnormality in the supply system this week.

HOW WE DID IT

[The following communication has reached us from a member of the staff who is obviously overwrought by the troubles through which we have recently passed. We take no responsibility for his utterances and certainly none for their accuracy. We fear he must have been studying the Daily Press over-sedulously and then have fallen asleep.—ED. S.R.]

THE strike found us of the SATURDAY as it found the rest of Fleet Street, all dressed up and nowhere to print. Now our heads though bloody are unbowed. In the fell clutch of circumstance, we have had the SATURDAY out. It matters not how late the issue, or how charged with misprints the scroll. We have done, in the simple old British way, without the least self-consciousness at the time or self-glorification afterwards, what we gather from articles in most of the daily papers was an epic thing. And we have done it alone. All through those grim days, when we rang up friends on the dailies for late news, it was necessary to begin by saying, "Would Your Grace be so good as to put the SATURDAY through to the News Editor?" All night long there came to our strained ears from Fleet Street the wail of infant viscounts left in the sub-editorial *crèches* while their mothers did charwomen's work for quite recently ennobled newspaper proprietors. And ever and anon the tinkle of an hereditary monocle dropped in Shoe Lane, the hoot of a car in which a baronet's wife was setting off to deliver copies of some public-spirited sheet among her wide circle of acquaintances. But we, we laboured alone. Not a duchess at our switchboard, not even the widow of a provincial civic knight to sweep our stairs, not a single coronet displaced by mopping a weary brow in our office.

But the staff was there. One long sympathetic look passed between them. No need for speech; both knew that the entire aristocracy had deserted them. Enough. To work, in complete independence. The printers, situated away there in far-flung Hammersmith, were out of action. The paper would have to be produced on the editorial premises. Within one minute of the decision, the great mimeographic apparatus was trundled into position. So innocent to look at that spiders had spun their webs over it, but in reality a weapon of terrible potency, capable, in certain conditions, of disseminating the written word in such a manner as to be legible. How to secure those conditions? All hands were summoned. Twenty-five per cent. were found capable of operating the machinery. Stepping forward as one woman, which indeed she was, she demonstrated the method; and under that light feminine touch, delicate yet determined, something groaned, something else clattered, and the machinery simplified itself by dropping certain presumably superfluous parts on the floor. Fifty per cent. of the staff then retired to the next room to produce copy for a monster so evidently avid for it.

A touch, a wheeze, a sound as of the fragments of a typewriter blown up here reassembling in heaven, and the majestic machinery swung into motion. The street throbbed with the noise. A special constable shivered and clutched his baton to beat off any who should interfere with the production of a loyal paper. Faster and faster. No time to pause and count the copies already produced. On, on, with the good work, while duchesses flushed with excitement as the dailies were pouring their narratives into the ears of sleepy dukes. First edition ready. Number, number! Sixty-four, on large paper, obviously to be signed by the Editor: copies for the staff and collectors. An interval for tea, second brew. Then once more to work, with the great mimeograph rocking the premises and even the neighbouring St. Paul's, Covent Garden. "Prince, what labour; prince, what pain!" All records are being broken. The machine is co-operating as it were a live thing. Spiders' webs may

have been on it when it was brought into use; there are no flies on it now. The horror of dawn; the faint noise, from the west of the weary peerage snoring, from the east of journalists congratulating themselves at coffee-stalls that they have seen duchesses in dungarees. A cry of agony from the printing staff because, like the train driven by the volunteer, the thing won't stop. We stop it by force. Some thousands of copies, enough for a real first edition. Where is the vast distributing organization?

Next day, two more editions, off machinery that is growing simpler and simpler as it sheds its parts. Next week, almost an anti-climax. Real print now, and real trains whereby one may get to Hammersmith. A snag over which we shall be reticent, but all coming along pretty well, though it is rather difficult to know whether it will be a four, an eight, a sixteen, or a thirty-two page paper. Telephonic communication with the editorial office, which is full of rumours but unperturbed. Yes, the mimeographic staff is once more making herself tea. Rumours float in, but she goes on "cutting bread and butter." We others, we have found something better than those second and third brews of tea. Beer, fortunately, is brewed but once. Still no duchesses, but the "comps" are back in a body. Shy traffickers, the advertisers have come back. More beer. You know the story of the beer that looked like beer, tasted like beer, but had no authority over the consumer? Well, the paper looks like a paper, and it has authority. We have done it again, better in a way, perhaps, though less excitingly than the previous week. Farewell, mimeograph, collapsible, capricious, wonderful mimeograph. If we meet again, we shall smile; if not, this parting is well made. Only, next time we shall insist on the duchesses being rationed out. Surely we are entitled to a small one?

W.

ON OVERLOOKING COVENT GARDEN

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

EVEN where we would not deliberately mislead, we are so ambiguous in this English of ours that already some persons have been lured to this page by a false scent, hoping to find here one of those pleasant little essays on London life, whose popularity will seemingly outlast the frame of St. Paul's. But my Covent Garden is not the market, but the Opera, and the overlooking is only my forgetfulness. Freud and his crew would sometimes seem to speak truth, for they tell us that we forget what the peering creature in the jungle of our unconscious minds wishes us to forget; and I see now why I never kept my promise about the Opera tickets. I was commissioned by some friends in the country to book seats at Covent Garden for two operas, and now the time has gone past when such seats are to be had either for love or money, or at least such love or money as I can furnish, and I, who promised so loudly and cheerfully, have done nothing. I did not really want them to go, could not understand why they should wish to do so, and now, it appears, have successfully if involuntarily prevented them from going. All this proves, if further proof should be wanted, that there is nothing so dead as an old faded passion, for time was when opera was almost the chief of my delights.

There are people, here and there, who retain a taste for this form of entertainment all their lives; others again who have always been and

always will be indifferent to it; but there is a third class of persons who once had a passion for it, as they had, perhaps, for Whitman or walking tours or chess or Swinburne, and have now lost all interest in the mongrel art. To this class I most certainly belong. Opera was one of the grand passionate affairs of my nonage. I would stand for hours in the rain to catch a glimpse of Tannhauser or Lohengrin, and even save up my shillings to hear the thundering choruses of 'Aida' or 'La Tosca' denouncing the police with the aid of sixteen first violins. If there was an opera within miles, I must go and hear it, otherwise my evening was in ruins. There was a time when I heard eleven operas in a fortnight, an astounding fit of debauchery this, which left me bankrupt and half idiotic for a month. And now, what a change! Last night, I believe, Tristan and Isolde were once more quaffing their philtre in this city, to the accompaniment of soulful blasts on the Teutonic trombone, but I did not give a fig for them and their nonsense. Not only was I not sorry that I was absent, I was quite glad. I never want to set eyes on the fat pawing pair again. Apart from Mozart's 'Figaro' and one or two others, things that I have heard many a time, I do not care if I never again attend another performance of opera. And even for glorious 'Figaro' I would not put myself now to any great inconvenience.

But during my operatic period I was a pure devotee of the art. I did not attend for social reasons. I did not even go, as so many do, merely to hear a certain great singer, to collect another name useful in a conversational lull. It was the operas themselves that drew me, and so long as they were performed at all, they could count upon my enthusiastic presence. Among the most regular visitors to the provincial town I lived in was, I remember, a certain shabby little Italian Opera Company, and I could always be found among its not too numerous patrons. Even I, however, realized that these Italians made up a droll assembly, and their scanty scenery and properties, served up night after night, their acting and singing, their appearance, all tended to reduce the operas they performed to one rather monotonous dead level of heroics and tatters, of soaring spirit and weak though abundant flesh. All of them, men and women, principals and chorus, appeared to be the same size, shape and age, namely, about five feet four, tubby, and fifty. If a tall thin young man had played with them, he would have seemed like a creature from another planet. The bass, I remember, was a little different from the others in being still rounded and fatter, and it was he, playing Mephistopheles, who stuck in the trap-door one night. Yet this Company had its moments. Their voices were hoarse, their figures all wrong, their scenery so faded that it was mere affectation pretending to change it, but they had passion and, at times, the grand manner. Their 'Pagliacci' was perhaps the worst sung and the most dismally presented of any that I have seen, but it was, I think, the only one that ever carried any conviction as a piece of drama. They were at home in it, and by dint of strutting and fuming and eye-rolling and gulping and sobbing with gusto and something like sincerity, they breathed a garlic-scented life into the thing. To see Englishmen, no matter how well

trained, in such pieces is to realize at one and the same time the limitations of Italian Opera and our national temper, for they are obviously aware of the fact that they are making asses of themselves and so make us feel that we are attending a hollow mockery, that it is high time these fellows washed their faces and put on their collars and ties.

Exactly what operas were performed by this forlorn but heroic Company I do not now remember, but I know that most of them were of the old stilted kind that refused to make the slightest concession to reality. How signally disappointing most operas are as pieces of drama! They would not be so disappointing if they had not an odd trick of arousing expectation, at least in the mind of romantic youth. I used to find the titles so intriguing that I could not rest until I had discovered what they were all about. To this day I could let my imagination play round such unknowns as 'La Dame Blanche' or 'Gazza Ladra' not without profit. But what anti-climaxes the pieces themselves were, even the best of them, after your dreams of them! I was never more disappointed in my life than I was the first time I saw 'The Magic Flute.' I heard and loved, as I do to this day, the moonlight and gossamer overture, and what with that, the artful and lovely promise of the title, and some vague stories of its connexion with Freemasonry, my imagination caught fire and I felt a thrill at the very sight of the name. But what a poor tawdry thing the reality was, with its paste-board serpents and cotton-wool priesthood, its huddle of meaningless little scenes, compared with the lovely opera, romantic, glamorous, mystical, of my fervent dreams! I could build up a whole theory of life—though fortunately it would be a false one—on my attitude to this opera, so enchanting when unknown, so disillusioning in actuality.

It did not take me long, of course, to lose interest in the old stilted pieces and to cultivate a taste for later and sterner stuff, for realism and the sounding brass or symbolism and the muted strings. But now that I am, so to speak, out at the other end, in the bleak daylight of indifference, it is these later, more ambitious and more solemn operatics that seem to me the more boring affairs. In theory, opera combines in itself some half-dozen arts, but in actual practice it merely loses touch with all that is fine and moving in these arts and contrives to assemble all their cheapest tricks. Even where it is not cheap—and Wagner is hardly that—it remains crushingly, colossally boring. When Wagner is making his orchestra create for us the enchanted ripples of a legendary Rhine or is making it celebrate idyllic love in a forest, he is a god. But as soon as he puts his Wotans and Siegfrieds and Parsifals on the stage, so many large fat men who stand in one place for an hour, drearily wrestling with a narrative that nobody can understand, he is the very emperor of the bores. If I were to go back to opera at all, it would be to the very silly old-fashioned kind, which is half a crazy melodrama and half a combined concert and ballet, which has its being in a purely artificial world that is like a toy. Given the opportunity, I would return to my Gonzalos and Lucias, who were not above dying twice if their voices held out and the audience were enthusiastic; to those inevitable peasants, the men so tanned and the women so pink and white, who

never had anything to do beyond pairing off neatly, drinking from empty paste-board tankards, and expressing melodious joy and sorrow; to those inns festooned with impossible flowers and those midnight dungeons and those backcloths in which incredible castles frowned from the summit of sugar-loaf mountains. To visit this world again, to hear true love born in the bird-like flutings of a soprano and at bay in the outrageous *portamentos* of the tenor, might even be a solace. But I cannot find it in Covent Garden, and I shall have to wait until I am benighted in Darlington or cast up by some huge wave of chance at the doors of the Bedford Corn Exchange.

THE THEATRE STOUT AND BITTER

BY IVOR BROWN

The Plough and the Stars. By Sean O'Casey. The Fortune Theatre.

Intimate Enemies. By Xenia Lowinsky and Norman McKinnel. The Savoy Theatre.

OF a certain English borough, renowned for few things and not at all for its political morality, it was remarked that the electoral struggles were keen enough to raise a thirst; in short, that they were stout and bitter. Much liquor flows in Mr. O'Casey's plays; his corner-boys and maturer scamps are always devil-portering it on the national fluid. But the bars and "Snugs" of his invention are more than the scenery for the inspired cross-talk of generous Irish wit: they become the arena in which the eternal frailties of man gobble up his decent instincts like the lions leaping on the Christians. Thus there is a kind of stoutness about everything this author writes which obscures the squalour of the bitter scene. Like Shakespeare he can take us pub-crawling; his Rosie Redmond is Doll Tearsheet writ small and speaking with the brogue. His Fluther Good could have held his own at the Boar's Head. 'The Plough and the Stars' is a savage Hogarthian portrait of the side-street Dubliners who preferred cheering rebels to fighting in their company. It runs with blood and tears as well as with strong drink; but above the curses and the rattle of machine-guns and the clink of glasses sounds a gigantic laughter that is not of scorn.

If Mr. O'Casey is to be labelled pessimist (and it is hard to see how he can escape the name) he is not of the aloof, sardonic kind. If he despairs of such humbugs as Fluther, of such pretenders as the Young Covey, and of such bundles of senile futility as Peter Flynn, he certainly does not hate them. There they are, he seems to say, the stuff of Ireland; from such rags no good garment can be sewn; but, take them as they come, and use them as you may and they serve an end. For the cosmic purpose they are nothing; for the comic purpose they are much. But we must take this tenement world in the round. For each one of the happy rascals, for Fluther and Peter and Covey, there is a girl rotting of consumption, a young man putting on a sword for vanity, and a young man's wife being widowed in a civil war. It so happened that in the first performance of this piece the comic actors were immensely more powerful than the others; illness had caused one of the most important of the "straight" parts to be taken up at very short notice by a young actress who could not give it the requisite force or a tithe of its proper poignancy. Thus the whole balance of the play was tilted in the acting, and the proportion between the humours of the corner-boy and the terrors of civil war was upset. On the

first night the audience laughed rather more than it should. That was partly due to the typical Irish spirit which insisted that this piece should have its first night, strike or no strike. Unexpectedly the general strike was called off in the morning, so that the night's audience came with a general sense of nervous relief, snatching greedily at mirth. Mr. O'Casey always sets me in remembrance of one of Mr. A. E. Housman's Last Poems:

Could man be drunk for ever
With liquor, love, or fights,
Lief should I rouse at morning
And lief lie down of nights.
But men at whiles are sober
And think by fits and starts,
And, if they think, they fasten
Their hands upon their hearts.

In this case the audience was plainly more disposed to the liquor, love, and fights than to the stark challenge of contemplation.

It says much for Dublin that, after a single demonstration of dismay, it allowed this play to have its run in peace. A year or two ago every actor concerned would have taken the stage at peril of his life. For young Ireland cuts a sluttish figure here; the young captain of the Republican Army goes into uniform only for the majesty of a Sam Browne belt and those for whom he dies are mainly wasters, liars, and thieves. The best of a bad lot in the tenement is Bessie Burgess, who sings 'Rule Britannia' at her neighbours while her son goes in English uniform to fight the Germans. Dublin must have laid aside the drivelling self-righteousness that made Irish patriots such intolerable company a few years back. Compared with the playful mockery of Synge, against which Dublin once so riotously protested, this play, like 'Juno and the Paycock,' is a very fury of chastisement. Whether it is a true indictment, I do not pretend to judge. But that its humour is as stout as its irony is bitter I can confidently assert. It is a work of size.

It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Sinclair, as Fluther, is completely master of every situation, a scamp in the grand manner; that Miss Maire O'Neill and Miss Sara Allgood, as rival queens of the tenement, go to it with an ecstasy of riot and reconciliation which suggests that their blood is all vitriol one moment and all alcohol the next. Miss Allgood, as the flower-seller, has to assume also the tragic mien and those who saw her in 'Juno and the Paycock' will not need further advertisement of her power over either muse. Then there is Mr. Sidney Morgan, now cast as a corner-boy who combines the weighty phraseology of Karl Marx with a considerable taste for the lighter pleasures. Mr. Morgan is admirable as ever and he handles a pack of cards as neatly as his mighty mouthings about the genesis of the proletariat. Miss Cathleen Drago as a Cyprian of the slums does her one scene brilliantly and of Mr. O'Rourke it need only be said that he can realize the simpletons of Mr. O'Casey with as bland a vacuity as he ever brought to the rustic oafs of Synge. Mr. Fagan's production is good in general; but the effects of distant mob-oratory in the second act seemed strangely wanting in any sort of plausibility. In brief this is not, as Joxer Daley would have said, "A darlin' play." It is altogether too muscular for such language of endearment; but it is presented by a darlin' team.

Stout in sin and bitter of tongue was Mr. Dudley Cranbourne, now on view at the Savoy Theatre. To be his intimate enemy could certainly have been scheduled as a dangerous occupation. For Clare Bennett it meant seduction, blackmail, and despair. But Dudley left his revolver lying about as carelessly as if it had been a packet of cigarettes and Clare's fingers, from which Dudley was trying to tear a ring, closed on the weapon. Unhappy the burglar who chose that night for an inspection of Dudley's safe.

He was likely to swing for Clare's marksmanship, for she was none of your Russian bunglers who cannot shoot a fellow-creature though they embrace with one hand and pull the trigger with the other. So on to a good theatrical third act in which Clare, recovering from delirium, learned of the burglar's conviction for murder and saw that she could only save his life and her honour by self-surrender. Providence, however, was kind to Clare and perhaps to the burglar. We can gather hat and coat undismayed.

But not unentertained. In the first act the dramatists play for position rather slowly, but the second act is rapid and vigorous, revealing a rare company of ruffians; in the third Mr. McKinnel has his single chance and naturally takes it to the full. My grievance is that Mr. McKinnel, as playwright, is altogether too contemptuous of Mr. McKinnel as actor, since the first condemns the second to lurk upon the fringes of the play. Miss Lowinsky must break down his modesty when next they collaborate. Here, indeed, is "the eye of Mars to threaten and command." Let us not miss a shred of its power. Mr. Charles Carson and Miss Hilda Bayley sin and suffer in hostile intimacy, while the subordinate scoundrels are freshly drawn and delightfully played.

ART

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

By ANTHONY BERTRAM

IT is *vieux jeu* to tilt at the Academy, but so long as it recurs with regular rapidity what can one do but tilt? Here, as usual, are row upon row of platitudinous subjects treated without invention or artistry, dull portraits, twopenny-coloured landscapes. It is not that there are no good pictures at Burlington House, but that there are so overwhelmingly many bad ones. One drags wearily from room to room, listening to the ineptitudes of visitors who care nothing for art, who never visit any other art show, and to whom the National Gallery, because it is always in season, is never worth visiting. This year, on figures, there are fewer pictures than usual; it may be so, but to me there seemed more than ever, a wilderness, a prairie, a flat universe of painted canvas.

There was nothing so interesting as Mrs. Dod Procter's masterly picture of last year; her 'The Back Bedroom,' in the present exhibition, is distinctly inferior. It lacks the brilliant cohesion of 'The Model,' but none the less it stands out as one of the most distinguished pictures of the year. The subject is a little too reminiscent of Mr. Sickert, but the manner of treatment does not follow that master at all. There is, as before, a fine display of accurate and "felt" modelling. Mr. Sickert himself is evidently determined not to conciliate his new Academy public by showing one of his easy, obviously delicious landscapes or more attractive subject pictures. He is exhibiting 'Death and the Maiden,' a fine work that makes no sensuous appeal of the academy sort, no titillating, pretty excitement of the cheaper æsthetic emotions. It is a grim, almost brutal realization of a grim and brutal subject. The maiden wheels over towards Death with a weariness that sags her whole body, a weariness of sordid years and unbeautiful surroundings, a weariness that Mr. Sickert has eternized in his great canvas at the Tate Gallery. Here is no charm of brushwork, but a direct ruthlessness of statement which the Academy public hate, to judge from the remarks I heard, because they are afraid of ugliness; they want in their pictures, as in their books, the happy ending.

Again and again the pseudo-artistic world bows to this cowardly demand, and it is amusing to notice

the efforts which certain craftsmen have made to battle on its behalf against the fierce truth of Mr. Epstein. There is, for example, a piece of sculpture called 'Resurgam,' by Mr. James A. Woodford. Mr. Woodford has given us an unconventional Christ very much in the position of Mr. Epstein's, but Mr. Woodford shows no reason why he should have departed from the usual sentimental *seicento* type. His Christ has not known pain, nor does he display any splendour of triumph; he is a stone figure conceived by the mind and not by the emotions. Then, too, there are challenging attempts to give us the pretty 'Rima'; one by Mr. Harold Harvey shows us a decently nude, very earthly olive-coloured lady in surroundings of the colour of spinach; she has hair like a Velasquez Infanta, and is engaged in some kind of balancing trick with a cockatoo; another by Mr. Alfred Priest is about the most unfairy thing I have ever seen; another nude, but decent, female appears, glancing coyly forth from foliage which appears to my unbotanic eyes rather like dock leaves.

The first picture that appealed to me was 'Closing Day of Devonshire House,' by Miss M. Etheldreda Gray, a solemn and dignified composition in which the colour, though quiet, is rich and well harmonized. In the same room are an attractive study of sunlight in the impressionist manner, 'Distant View of Westminster,' by John E. Mace, and a quiet, restful study of sands and sky by Mr. Oliver Hall. This is a painter whose work throughout the exhibition strikes a note of classic restraint and serious purpose. 'Frances McGregor,' by Mr. Gerald Kelly, like his 'Sir Archy Birkmyre,' is a piece of vivid portraiture with great artistic merit in composition, colouring and feeling. I found Room II entirely uninteresting, while in Room III only Mr. Walter W. Russell's 'Alice,' the diploma work deposited on his election as R.A., really stands out; it is a penetrating and beautiful work. It is difficult to know what to make of the enormous canvas by Mr. Charles Sims in Room IV. At first it seems untidy and thin, but after examination it gives up fine and original qualities. Three figures are grouped against a vast drapery, the three daughters of Mr. John Waddell; one is upright and austere in pose; the other two close together and forming a pattern which is echoed in the folds of the drapery. On the whole one must conclude that the picture, like Mr. Sims's other big work, 'The Studio of a Painter of Fêtes Galantes,' is a remarkable achievement expressing a genuine and serious if bizarre vision. Similarly with Mr. Algernon Newton's large 'Camden Town,' the first impression is not entirely favourable, this time because of its excessive smoothness; but a further acquaintance shows how considerable are the merits of this well-built picture in which the quiet of evening is so firmly held. In Gallery VII are to be noted the creamy texture and colour of the red velvet dress in Mr. Douglas S. Gray's 'Rosalind,' and the charming ease of pose and swiftness of handling in Mr. Harold Speed's 'E. J. Sullivan, Esq.'

Recently in this REVIEW I wrote about an exhibition of water-colours by Mr. Claude Muncaster. His pictures in this year's Academy confirm the impression then gathered that in him is the promise of very great powers. His talent is undeniable; knowing his age, I feel that he is perhaps a little too good as a craftsman, if that is possible; I mean that he seems to have so petty a battle to express himself that he may fall into the dangers of facility. He has all the equipment necessary for a great artist; we have yet to see whether, with maturity, he will gain some profound and original mode of feeling which will translate him into the sphere for which his talent fits him. In the meantime his work surpasses that of the majority of exhibitors in sound accomplishment. One other picture I liked very much, 'Rehearsal,' by Mr. Vivian

Forbes. Like Degas, Mr. Forbes has gone behind the glitter of the theatre to the hard work of it. Two boys in pink tights juggle with red balls and spinning plates to the empty seats that make a blue pattern behind them. It is a world of plush and garish colours which the painter has brought into harmony; it has a pathetic twist like Mr. Sickert's world.

The sculpture is exactly as usual. What a shock it would be if a work of art somehow crept into those dead and dreary galleries, and how many of us would be awake to recognize it? The water-colours are, as usual, pleasant for the most part. The architecture room is, as usual, a refuge, a place to sit down in and visualize what will come of these neat, deceptive models and drawings. When I was there two ladies poked their heads in. "Oh," said one, "this is no good. This is only architecture." I think that was the saddest remark I heard in a whole afternoon of sad remarks.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

* The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, although he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.

* Letters which are of reasonable brevity, and are signed with the writer's name, are more likely to be published than long and anonymous communications.

* Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach us by the first post on Wednesday.

THE TRADE DISPUTES ACT

SIR,—Nothing has so profoundly impressed the public as the stoppage of London newspapers by organized labour, because, and solely because, the opinions of these papers were not to the liking of the trade unions. In these arbitrary acts we can see the beginning of naked, tyrannical revolution, and the arrogant trampling on the liberties of others.

It will be remembered that such an intolerable oppression of public opinion has never occurred before in the history of the British Press, outside isolated and rare instances of Governmental interference. What is the remedy? The remedy is the immediate repeal of that infamous, log-rolling piece of legislation, the Trade Union Disputes Act, wherein Lord Oxford to his eternal disgrace put the trade unions above the law. If there is any backbone and public spirit left in the members of the House of Commons, they will force the Government to carry out at once this highly necessary Act of Repeal. The public will observe that neither the Socialist Party nor the Trade Union Congress have repudiated or discouraged the abominable acts of tyranny involved in the suppression of the London Newspaper Press.

I am, etc.,

F. E. COE

88 Staines Road, Twickenham, S.W.

A SIDELIGHT ON RUSSIA

SIR,—I have just read a book which should be in the hands of all those who have, or intend to have, dealings with Russia. Written by a French working man, who went to Moscow to see for himself what was really happening there, hoping to learn how he might improve the condition of working men in Europe, Henri Béraud was entirely disillusioned. He made no use of various introductions given to him, because he felt, soon after his arrival, that it would not be fair to take advantage of opportunities offered to him by persons who expected a favourable report.

The book, 'Ce que j'ai vu à Moscou,' consists of a series of sketches. It shows that Communism is admittedly non-existent, that under the present regime capitalism is a State monopoly, and that, apart from

the illiterate farmer, no one dares to express an original opinion. The farmer is in a peculiar position. He alone refuses to accept paper money; in exchange for his grain he insists on goods. An attempt to use force against him resulted in a strike. The massacres which followed had no effect. Russia is so vast and communications so bad that the news of the blotting out of one village did not reach the next. The strike continued. Famine resulted. The farmer had to be propitiated on his own terms.

Sidelights thrown on the Russian character are most illuminating. Every question is answered, either by quotations from Government declarations or by the author's own personal experience.

Let me give one example. Should commercial dealings with Russia be resumed? Well, the Bolsheviks have declared many times that "les engagements pris avec les états capitalistes, c'est-à-dire illégaux, n'ont de valeur qu'autant qu'ils servent les intérêts du prolétariat." Monsieur Béraud adds, "Nous savons ce qui nous reste à faire. Un pays averti en vaut deux." But he does not advocate no dealings, he sees that the question is too serious. His advice is to follow the example of the farmer.

An English translation of this book would be extremely useful. Might I suggest that one of your many readers should undertake the task?

I am, etc.,

HENRY A. TURNER

THE STANDARD OF ENGLISH

SIR,—I find the dogmatism of "Tallyman" more offensive than anything yet reported of Mr. St. John Ervine. There is, unfortunately, no uniformity of speech even among "people well-born and well-educated," and even if there were, their good fortune in life should be no bar to criticism where their use of the Mother-tongue demonstrably tends to its corruption.

To say that they "don't roll their 'r's,' or whistle when they pronounce 'wh,'" is to admit that they do not pronounce these sounds at all. Even "Tallyman," if he can listen to himself in a detached moment, will probably find that he sounds the aspirate in "who." Why not elsewhere? And though he probably pronounces "corn" as though it were a fit rhyme to "dawn," he would probably shrink from so linking the words in a poem above his name. And his reluctance would surely mean the recognition that there is a right way of sounding the neglected "r," and that the roll of the Scot is, however we may smile at it, the survival of a propriety (and a beauty) which we Englishmen have for the most part lamentably lost. And are we to lose another letter by following the example of the undeniably "well-born and well-educated" Earl whose broadcasting recently revealed to us that he omits all the final "g's" from his present participles?

But these things are trifles when compared with the universal smothering of the vowel sounds now fashionable, so that "shower" becomes a homonym for a Persian ruler and "flower" a perfect rhyme to "star," the final "r" being, of course, mute in all of them. If "Tallyman" asks us to approve this sort of thing because the "well-born and well-educated" are doing it, he is asking us to do our language a wrong which will be resisted at least by many whose fortune did not give them a silver spoon at birth.

I am, etc.,

WILFRID THORLEY

81 Valley Road, Streatham, S.W.16

A HOLIDAY FROM NEWS

SIR,—Your pleasant but tendentious contributor, T. E. W., in his article 'A Holiday from News,' speaks of his fellow journalists as a "particularly

deserving class of the poor." They would certainly be poor of spirit if none of them raised a protest against the *dénigration* of the profession in which T. E. W. luxuriously indulges. People of other crafts do not talk as he does. Lawyers, doctors, sailors, soldiers, the clergy, drapers and dockers make the most of their order. Sailors, it is true, yearn for the mythical stability of fruit farms when they are afloat, and declare that all sailors are fools to be at sea. But they speak no ill of each other's seamanship in public. Whereas T. E. W. tells us that journalists cannot even think save under the spur of necessity.

It is extremely injudicious to fire off epigrams of this sort, which may be uttered in an access of inverted playfulness, but are likely to be taken at their face value by some readers. T. E. W., in a gesture ample as the sky, credits all journalists with the "faculty for being passionately concerned without notice about matters to which they gave no thought yesterday and will give none to-morrow." The true journalistic faculty is to be able to write acceptably upon indifferent matters without taking the very least concern or interest in them, and to be concerned passionately and lastingly in causes which are of true moment.

It is not to be denied that there are journalists about who have the cultivated stunt faculty, the trained momentary passion. To this sin they as a rule add the further one of taking no interest in politics. But it is quite unjust for T. E. W. to ignore the many who cling to hopes and causes with an intensity of true feeling. If only their readers would maintain a like intensity and by continuous epistles to their chosen organs on worthy topics would ensure more of the calm recurring flood and less of odd eddies in the columns of the Press.

I am, etc.,

J. M. N. J.

[Has not our correspondent perhaps taken T. E. W. a shade over-seriously? Most journalists love their trade well enough to be able to laugh at it.—ED. S.R.]

THE OLD SQUIRE

SIR.—*A moi! touché!* The phrase "explosive indiscretions" scores one for Mr. Shanks with a perfectly legitimate *riposte*. But I am never afraid of being hit in defence of my friends, and I am a better friend of George Osbaldeston than your critic will ever be. Let me remind Mr. Shanks, however, that, because he found some difficulty in holding the 'Autobiography,' he thought that most of its invaluable pictures should be omitted. I am tempted to call this an indiscreet explosion of which he will repent. I gladly recognize that Mr. Shanks uses the word "impertinences" in its scholarly sense; for, as he well knows, nothing a man has done or written is without relevance in considering what he may subsequently write or do. This is one reason why the writer of his own 'Memoirs'—and I am grateful to Mr. Shanks for mentioning mine in the same breath with the Squire's—is always open to intensive comment and perfectly prepared to deal with it.

I am, etc.,

THEODORE A. COOK

¶ We have received many letters of appreciation and congratulation from readers who obtained copies of our emergency issues during the strike. These letters are far too numerous to publish, and we wish to take this opportunity of thanking our friends collectively for their messages.—ED. S.R.

LITERARY COMPETITIONS—12

SET BY B. IFOR EVANS

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best official announcement that the Day of Judgment is imminent, prepared for transmission by the B.B.C. The announcement must not exceed 100 words in length, and should be accompanied by an appropriate request for the preservation of calm.

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best poem, of not more than 16 lines, in praise of Lemonade. The poem should be written in the manner of Mr. G. K. Chesterton as propaganda for a Temperance Society.

RULES

The following rules must be observed by all competitors:

i. All envelopes must be marked LITERARY, followed by the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and addressed to the Editor, The SATURDAY REVIEW, 9 King Street, London, W.C.2 (e.g., this week: LITERARY 12A, or LITERARY 12B).

ii. Typescript is not essential, provided the writing is legible, but competitors must use one side of the paper only. Pen-names may be employed if desired.

iii. Where a word limit is set, every fifty words must be marked off by competitors on their MSS.

iv. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves to himself the right to print in part or in whole any matter sent in for competition, whether successful or not. MSS. cannot be returned. Competitors failing to comply with any of these rules will be disqualified.

Entries must reach the Editor, addressed according to the rules, not later than by the first post on Monday, May 31, 1926. The results will be announced in the issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW immediately following. The Editor very much regrets that neither he nor the setter of the Competitions can enter into any correspondence with competitors or others concerning the competitions or questions arising therefrom.

RESULTS OF COMPETITION 10

(April 24, 1926)

SET BY GERALD BULLETT

A. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best sonnet to Shakespeare, as by Mr. W. H., rejecting the advice addressed to him in Shakespeare's Sonnets (to marry and beget children). Wit is acceptable, but not to the exclusion of poetry.

B. We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best fragment, not exceeding five hundred words, of a novel in the ultra-subjective manner written from the point of view of a goldfish. Syntax is optional, and for the purposes of this competition the goldfish may be endowed with as much rational capacity as the subject of such a novel usually possesses.

REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Mr. Gerald Bullett, who set these competitions, being prevented by the strike from examining efforts of competitors, judgment on them is passed by the Editor.

10A. The entries for this competition were both fairly numerous and of even quality. To choose between the more meritorious of the sonnets is far from easy. Regard has been had not only to literary excellence but to plausibility, and there have been at once ruled out certain sonnets which did not even pretend to be Elizabethan in diction and shape or appropriate to the situation of Shakespeare's friend. Marks have been deducted where the supposed speaker's objections to marriage were quite conventional or of the comic journal type. It is pleasant to be able to say that a large proportion of competitors realized that the argument must be on a level with

that against which it was directed, and strove to supply Mr. W. H. with ingenious reasons for resisting the pleas put forward by the poet. Here special commendation is due to Lester Ralph, E. de Stein, K. E. T. Wilkinson, N. M. M., James Courage, and "Amelian." All these saw that Mr. W. H. must produce more or less fantastical reasons, philosophical or æsthetic, and not merely express a commonplace aversion from squalling children and domestic responsibility.

Only two competitors credited Mr. W. H. with knowledge of Shakespeare's own married life. Nor were there many who alluded to the Dark Lady. John Hobman made some play with Anne, but reduced his chances by indifference to diction. "Bébé," for the sake of her jest, made Mr. W. H. a shuddering prophet of the shingled girl of to-day. "Pete," with an idea not incapable of being cast effectively into the final couplet, somehow lost the Elizabethan note just there. On the other hand, both Lester Ralph and "Geehg" were happy in their concluding lines.

The first prize goes to Lester Ralph, who really has packed his sonnet, and who can produce a striking line:

Some piebald ort from loveliness and lust.

There is a suggestion of real feeling under the ingenuity of his argument.

The second prize is won by E. de Stein, whose sonnet has grace, and a neat concluding turn, and who misses the first prize only because in Lester Ralph's lines there is that hint of power that might flare into authentic passion.

"Geehg," whose sonnet we also print, comes nearest to these. Not far off is N. M. M., whose most noteworthy merit is that his sonnet flows naturally from the first line to the last. James Courage has a real instinct for the Elizabethan way of working in something between subtlety and quibbling. "Defeating with fresh beauty beauty's death" is a good line, and the idea in "To make thine own invention bear increase," is the kind of idea we desired to find in exercises of this sort.

THE WINNING SONNET

To replicate the touches you admire,
And mar thereby the beauty we adore,
I have no will, nor would I be the sire
Who by the dam's loss heapeth his own store.
That darker loveliness which snared us twain
Must still take toll of fairness such as mine;
And her lost beauty, added to my gain,
Bring increase but of shade to fleck the shine.

Bid me not, then, to "breed another me,"
Some piebald ort from loveliness and lust;
The image to be stamped should be of thee,
Could seal make impress on such fickle dust.
From out my ashes such a Phoenix raise,
There yet would be no Will to sing his praise.

LESTER RALPH

SECOND PRIZE

What rose by nature fashioned blows so fair
As that fair rose seen through a poet's eyes?
'Gainst envious time shall nature match his care
Within whose lines her beauty never dies?
Safe in thy garden where no summers wane
Beauty's more perfect petals bloom unfurl'd.
Shall beauty, borrowing beauty from thy brain,
To nature trust her store and cheat the World?
So I'll not wed. Yet not for fear of time,
Nor yet for greed of beauty, I pretend
To vow mine image to thy deathless rhyme,
But lest I seek a son and lose a friend!
Nay, I'll not wed. The reason? Dare I show it?
Lest thou shouldst think I think thou art no poet!

E. DE STEIN.

HONOURABLE MENTION

Dost thou advise me then to that which thou
Hast tried and proved to be a blessed state,
Or from thy love's wish only readst me now
A fortunate, and much exceeding fate?

But either way—though take it not amiss
That with thy pleading I decline to go—
Example more to me than precept is,
And a dark lady bids the answer, No!
A lady dark, that proves against thy preaching
How old appeal supplanted is by new,
And mars thy wisdom's, or thy love's, beseeching
By showing thee to early ties untrue.
Strayed sheep have seldom bleated others back,
But drawn them still to follow in their track.
"GREENG."

10b. The entries for this competition were less numerous and several of the competitors were not mindful of the models suggested by the term "ultra-subjective." However, the best of the attempts submitted were remarkable. "Puffin" produced something which, if read at a moment of drowsiness, might be taken for an excerpt from the work of some quite unsmiling master of the new fiction. "Luke" achieved a similar success. Hugh E. Wright destroyed that illusion at the end, but deliberately, and not through incapacity. Indeed, after spending some time over the work of these and certain other competitors, it is difficult not to feel that ultra-subjective fiction is within the power of a great many people who mercifully refrain from producing it except in gay response to such an invitation as Mr. Bullett's.

One opportunity has been well seized by virtually all the more successful competitors. They have seen that a novel written from the point of view of a goldfish ought to exhibit a nice feeling for the element in which the heroine lives. Hitherto, one has supposed that the most piscine and watery thing in English literature was that amazing and shamefully neglected poem, in three sonnets, by Leigh Hunt. Now—well, we must not indulge in the extravagance of saying that he has been rivalled in prose, but really amid the agreeable nonsense produced by our competition there are touches showing a quite extraordinary feeling for water.

The first prize goes to "Puffin." The second prize has been exceedingly difficult to award. Hugh E. Wright has strong claims on the ground that he has combined a variety of merits. "Luke's" effort is throughout in one vein, but it is so well done that on consideration we have decided to award him the second prize. Will he please send us his name and address?

A. A. Le M. S. has some good phrases—"a limitation, a negation of otherness," and a good stroke in the reconciliation of man and fish in Dagon. "Pierre," who is sixteen, will win some of our prizes in time. But after the few excellent efforts there is a wide gap, due to misunderstanding of the nature of the competition, which definitely required extreme subjectivity. One competitor wasted her energies on writing of the goldfish in the most thoroughly external manner imaginable. Another credited the goldfish with little more than curiosity about the furniture of the room in which its globe stood. The essential thing was that the goldfish should vibrate exquisitely.

We print the winning fragments below:

THE WINNING ENTRY

... the waves of thought flowed out billowing, receding, breaking against the green, untamable ridges shaken by surging, golden restlessness.

You knew that you were beautiful.

But then you had known that for a long, long time. Ever since you had seen the shadow of a lucent flame that was your swift, eager self startlingly alive against the dimness of an unworthy setting. Kindness. Courtesy. Little urbanities with fins. Perhaps you thought you believed in them. But you didn't . . . not really.

You had always known that you were different.

Everywhere a great stream of fishes coming up . . . going on. Round and round. Each one with faiths and obligations, but something missing which you had.

A lightening of the gloom, an interest. The curve of life carrying them from weakness to strength and then back again to weakness, but bearing you on from strength to strength. Imperishably.

Suddenly you knew you were not a fish but a force.

A running flame, threading and re-threading the green distance like a luminous ribbon. A force that broke things . . . would not allow the existence of rights, not to be resisted. Rights. Once you had thought that a bold word. It had scared you. Sent you darting away from that other nearness waiting to involve you in a dual life. But you were not frightened any more.

You knew now what they meant when they said you were psychic.

Endless, unflinching stabs of insight. He had come swooping, disturbing . . . wanting you to think him brave and magnificent. Not seeing himself the pitiful, furtive thing that he was. Cleaving, sharing. Once you had thought . . . but not now.

Deep down you must have known you couldn't share.

More than anything you wanted to be free. Ah, that was it, free! Not bound as he was by desire for something so far above. . . You wanted to laugh in his sad eyes, flick him with your tail as you skimmed past. Public opinion. You had to think of that. Cramping, interfering . . . never to be alone with yourself . . . always pushed and obstructed by clumsy, ignoble hordes. How endure, how live out the whole of time spent like this?

Somehow you knew that at last you were about to act.

Up through the cool green fields . . . lapping, caressing . . . enhancing the shadow tones of a lithe body. Upward still, the gentle rhythmic movement in the topmost regions assuaging, preparing . . . preparing you for what? Something not mild and easy and tame . . . not just a going on and on. Something different. All the strength of your being gathered for one leaping effort . . . into that stupendous and irresistible void. . .

"PUFFIN."

SECOND PRIZE

Full stroke, stroke, stroke, then just a quiver, the faintest flick of the tail to eke out the waning impetus, and you were back again at the mark. Back again at the flaw, that hung like an elongated imprisoned tear in the substance of the glass and was what showed the beginnings and ends of the crass, ineluctable little journeys. Why one swam . . . ? Why one was bent incessantly on rediscovering a world so vilely small, so blatantly discoverable to its last eddy without the minutest bracing of the strength, the lightest Nautilus-thrill of adventuring peril . . . ? Curious how even in exile, incarcerated, in bottomless languor one still obeyed the law, was it of life, of motion, of some sick, grey hope to breach the leaden familiarity of one's daily horizon. Or despair perhaps it was that moved one, the frenzied certainty that one must act, must act, must act to make the stirring of an event in the numbing clarity of the water, the pellucid nothingness of the tiny prison. The clearness, the utter lack of cloud, of content, was the worst. A leaf even on the surface that would have sent down its shadow like repeated tiny platters of darkness through the strata of a ripple . . . if there had been so much as one rock, one flat-leaved water plant to create with its two aspects, the leaving and the re-greeting from the other side, the illusion of change. But there was nothing. Only emptiness and aching light, as if one swam forever, compassing the cramped circuit in three strokes and a tremor, in a tiny, vacant moon.

The moon . . . That once had been a name, an image. There had been days once, of ecstasy and liquid semi-darkness that filled the body, even to the very palate, with sweetness, when the moon had lain like a dim white flower pressed flat on the roof of the world. Even as a child, a pale and tiny fish nuzzling in the shadow of the protecting mother-fin, one had felt the tremor of beauty drifting down through the water, and shivered . . . All had been darkness there, peace, cool . . . green opacity of the pond that pressed faintly resisting against one's headway, like a caress, the deluding rocks, the weeds, the floating many-tiered ships of the lotus, and those pale Eastern faces that stared down wordless, the darkness of their white inscrutability matching itself through the water with the secrecy that lay, vibrant and pent, in the child soul . . .

"LUKE."

A NUMBER OF THINGS

MR. SINCLAIR LEWIS has refused the Pulitzer Prize, and in a very candid letter to the body which awarded it to him has explained why he does so. That prize, it appears, is not precisely for the best novel by an American writer: it is for the novel which "shall best present the wholesome atmosphere of American life and the highest standard of American manners and manhood." In other words, and as it seems to Mr. Sinclair Lewis, it is an incitement to timid writing with an other than artistic purpose. However, it would appear that he abominates all literary prizes. There I disagree with him, just as I disagree with people who think our Laureateship an absurdity. Official recognition is much more likely to come the way of excellent mediocrity, or to be the final and superfluous reward conferred on a writer already laden with laurel, than to fall to an innovatory writer, when it would be of real use to him; it does little for the individual writer. But it does something for literature. It causes hosts of people who otherwise would not respect literature to feel that it is worthy of the respect of the nation to which it is given. And much as I sympathize with Mr. Sinclair Lewis in the particular case, I cannot subscribe to his general condemnation of literary prizes.

* *

In this country, however, what we need is not so much more prizes for writers as prizes for people who buy books to read. There are such people, but they are few, and they ought to be encouraged. Under happier conditions, with a Chancellor of the Exchequer so accomplished with the pen as Mr. Churchill, I should urge that the portion of a man's income spent on books ought to be exempted from taxation. As things are, I can only invite some millionaire to give prizes to persons who buy contemporary books with generosity and discrimination. And even to people who buy contemporary books largely though foolishly. For were it not for these best sellers hardly a publisher in the country could afford to take the risk of issuing literature at all frequently. Do not suppose that these prizes would go to literary people. They would not. Men of letters rely on review copies, presentation copies from fellow authors, books fallen from heaven, books from the libraries; they do not, to any extent worth considering, buy the books of their brothers and sisters.

* *

I may seem to have contradicted myself in alluding to best sellers. If Miss X and Mr. Y can attain to huge sales, there must be plenty of book-buying in this country. There is not. Our best sellers are "best" where no writer sells really well. The most noted of them are unknown outside a circle which comprises only a small part of the population. Mr. Humphrey Ward, who has just passed away, was once invited orally to dinner by a man who added, "and if there is a Mrs. Humphrey W., bring her along too." Indifference to literature is found in the most unlikely places. A living novelist, who is the nephew of two great Victorian poets, and whom I was chaffing about having been brought up in too exclusively literary an atmosphere, told me that an aunt of his once uttered, in the very central shrine, these desolating words: "Well, rather than do nothing, I would take a book and read."

* *

Whether women are becoming too obtrusive is the kind of question on which I decline to offer any opinion, but I think Miss Wilkinson in the recent debate with Major Walter Elliot scored a point when she said men, or the journalistic sub-division of them, were mainly responsible for dragging in sex where it is irrelevant.

The kind of journalist who thinks "Woman Found Dead" is less interesting than "Baronet's Aunt Found Dead" is also responsible for quantities of chatter about the dress of women when they are acting simply as citizens. The thing is silly, and to women who take their Parliamentary or other public duties seriously, it must be irritating. And Major Elliot was surely mistaken in adducing women's dress as proof of their obtrusiveness. Women are, perhaps, less subservient to the decrees of fashion than they were, but they are still meek enough in their willingness to sacrifice much of their physical individuality in order to look like the other women wearing the latest style of dress. Where is the knock-kneed girl who insists on wearing long skirts? I should like to hear of that not impossible but decidedly improbable she.

* *

Once more I have evidence in support of my contention that things do not happen when they cannot be reported. How many motor accidents have there been during the days when large numbers of volunteers were speeding along the roads of England without any restriction on speed? So far as can be ascertained, extraordinarily few. Inexperience and haste do not seem to produce what might be expected of them. What, then, does cause accidents? Apparently, it must be the spirit of joy-riding as contrasted with the spirit of riding on national service. Certainly the factor of speed may be eliminated from actuarial calculations of the life of the motorist, and it would be no bad thing for the general public, and a welcome relief for the police, if there were henceforth less fuss about exceeding the speed limit. Reckless driving would cover injudicious speed in congested areas.

* *

With the return of the taxis to the streets one is once more irritated by the scale of their charges. There may or may not be some hope of relief through the introduction of two-seaters; but it is certain that those vehicles will not be available, at any rate in appreciable numbers, for a year. Are we throughout the interval to endure the present charges for conveyance by taxi? To people who live some way from the centre of London and are occasionally kept there by work or pleasure till after the last train has gone it is a serious grievance. I am assured that several Members of Parliament mean to press this question after Whitsun, but I do not feel optimistic about the results. The probability is that any reduction will be only over short distances. But who seriously needs a taxi for a half-mile journey?

* *

The difference of light and atmosphere between England and Australia may account for much that has seemed like excessive caution and dullness in the batting of the Australian team up to now. Certainly they have been given conditions as widely different from their own as it is possible to imagine. But nevertheless they make the impression of men so long accustomed to play for safety that they feel it would be disastrous for them to attempt anything else. Even after one has made all possible allowances for the weather, six games played and only one finished is not a promising start. It looks rather like the record of a team that has not enough confidence in its bowling to take any risks with the bat. Later events may provide materials for a revised judgment. At present I am inclined to the conclusion that the different conditions in the two countries are at last, after some fifty years, bearing full fruit. Methods are changing, and in different directions. It may be that we shall come to the lamentable end of being always beaten in Australia by being worn down and of always failing to win in England for want of time.

TALLYMAN

REVIEWS

SCIENCE AND POETRY

BY EDWARD SHANKS

Science and Poetry. By I. A. Richards. *Psyche Miniatures*, No. 1. Kegan Paul. 2s. 6d. net.

NOT long ago protest was made here against books that are too large to read with comfort. It is time, I think, now to protest against books that are too small, the filter-passers of the literary world, books not much larger than a postage-stamp and offering not much more reading matter, books that if you let them fall in the street are likely to slip down a grating and carry their gigantic messages to the sewers and the rats. For all these microscopic volumes have gigantic messages: it seems to be the rule nowadays that the smaller the book the vaster will be the subject of which it treats. Mr. Richards's essay is a case in point. It runs to something like fifteen thousand words, within which space it attempts to examine the effect produced by the growth of scientific knowledge on poetry. In order to do this it first presents a reasonably complete and detailed theory of poetry stated in terms of modern psychology. It is, of course, in one sense a compliment, and a deserved one, to say that one could have wished it longer. It is on every page readable and suggestive. But when I say that, I mean also that Mr. Richards has not sufficiently expounded his thesis, and I suspect that if he had followed up some of his implications more carefully, and if he had used more examples, he might have been a little more uneasy about some of his conclusions than he seems to be.

He is interesting because he is a psychologist who is not only concerned with literature but has an understanding of it as well. His colleagues have much neglected a very promising field for their investigations. There is a great deal to be done in the way of inquiring into the phenomena of poetical composition. Psycho-analysis has its place here as well as the methods pursued by Mr. Richards, though with both I imagine the chief benefit would be to psychology rather than to poetry. But from no point of view can fault be found with such exposition of theory as this:

In its use of words poetry is just the reverse of science. Very definite thoughts do occur, but not because the words are so chosen as logically to bar out all possibilities but one. No. But because the manner, the tone of voice, the cadence and the rhythm play upon our interests and make them pick out from among an indefinite number of possibilities the precise particular thought which they need. This is why poetical descriptions often seem so much more accurate than prose descriptions. Language logically and scientifically used cannot describe a landscape or a face. To do so it would need a prodigious apparatus of names for shades and romances, for precise particular qualities. These names do not exist, so other means have to be used. The poet, even when, like Ruskin or De Quincey, he writes in prose, makes the reader pick out the precise particular sense required from an indefinite number of possible senses which a word, phrase or sentence may carry. The means by which he does this are many and varied. Some of them have been mentioned above, but the way in which he uses them is the poet's own secret, something which cannot be taught. He knows how to do it, but he does not himself know how it is done.

The way in which this psychologist writes of literature might serve as a rebuke and an example to certain critics who are over-fond of using psychological jargon which they themselves hardly understand.

But when Mr. Richards, having established the nature of poetry, proceeds to show how it is faring in the modern world his theme becomes wider and his argument more doubtful. His premise is that in the last sixty years a change has come over the human mind, which he calls "the *Neutralization of Nature*, the transference from the Magical View of the world to the scientific, a change so great that it is perhaps only paralleled historically by the change, from what-

ever adumbration of a world-picture preceded the Magical View, to the Magical View itself." (Incidentally, that is not an historical parallel, since we do not know that such a change ever took place.) By the Magical View Mr. Richards means, of course, "the belief in a world of Spirits and Powers which control events, and which can be evoked and, to some extent, controlled themselves by human practices." Perhaps his view of the consequences is best expressed in the following passage, it being first explained that by "pseudo-statement" he means something which "is 'true' if it suits or serves some attitude or links together attitudes which on other grounds are desirable," e.g., one of the statements of which poetry consists:

The long-established and much-encouraged habit of giving to emotive utterances—whether pseudo-statements simple, or looser and larger wholes taken as saying something figuratively—the kind of assent which we give to established facts, has for most people debilitated a wide range of their responses. . . . For most men the recognition of the neutrality of nature brings about—through this habit—a divorce from poetry. They are so used to having their responses propped up by beliefs, however vague, that when these shadowy supports are removed they are no longer able to respond. Their attitudes to so many things have been forced in the past, over-encouraged. And when the world-picture ceases to assist there is a collapse. Over whole tracks of natural emotional response we are to-day like a bed of dahlias whose sticks have been removed. And this effect of the neutralization of nature is only in its beginnings. Consider the probable effects upon love-poetry in the near future of the kind of enquiry into basic human constitution exemplified by psycho-analysis.

In short, Mr. Richards seems to believe, so far as I can follow him, that the ordinary man, having discovered (if he has discovered it) that a deity capable of being invoked by prayer is not a scientific fact but a part of a world-picture suitable for the ordering of his experience, turns away with equal distrust from Shelley's poetic "pseudo-statement" that the lark pours its full heart from heaven or near it and never was a bird.

Does he? I think Mr. Richards overrates the extent and the effect of the change. Unless and until the mystery of the origin of life is solved, the neutralization of nature is not complete and, until it is, the Magical View, not much more greatly changed in our time than it was in the progress from Vegetation Rites to the theology of St. Thomas, remains the most acceptable world-picture. We have seen Mr. Shaw driving God from him in his youth; and we have seen God returning upon him in the guise of the Life Force and making him a mystic in his old age. The fact that many educated persons accept the statements of religion as "pseudo-statements" in Mr. Richards's sense is neither new nor subversive of anything whatever. They do so accept them and equally they accept pseudo-statements in poetry. For many persons the mystery of the universe is now within them, not outside them, but so long as a mystery remains the human mind will retain the Magical View, however its terms may be changed. Unfortunately Mr. Richards has tested his theories very little with practical examples. His chapter on 'Some Contemporary Poets' comes to very little more than saying that Mr. de la Mare and Mr. Yeats seek refuges from life and that Mr. Lawrence has adopted a strange and baseless philosophy, which might have been said of other poets in other ages. If he had worked out his thesis less in the void and with more reference to the facts he might have saved himself from saying on one page that "a great deal of poetry can be written for which total independence of all beliefs is an easy matter," but that "it is never poetry of the more important kind," while on another he asserts that "we need no beliefs, and indeed we must have none, if we are to read 'King Lear.'" Nothing, I suppose, could have saved him from the scientific *naïveté* of the delicious remark that "Galton was the first person to test the efficacy of prayer experimentally."

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Wickets and Goals. By J. A. H. Catton. Chapman and Hall. 15s. net.

SOME sporting journalists know more of journalism than of sport; occasionally the balance is reversed and a great sporting "name" may be tacked on to most indifferent writing. In Mr. Catton there is a nice proportion of these qualities; he writes with the impress of knowledge and with the impetus of a life's affection. He has been more than fifty years a journalist and he has been watching football and cricket throughout his time. As an elder statesman of the press-box he has sat above many an historic battle of green fields; as a most excellent companion he has had the confidence of the warriors on and off the field. Most of his work has been done in the north and he responds perfectly to that high seriousness tempered with wry wit which is the mood of players among the hills and mills of industrial England. When the tiny, rubicund man comes into the press-box it is as though Aurora Borealis were on view and northern lights begin to flash amid a sombre company.

Mr. Catton has seen many changes both in the play and the writing about play. He interviewed George Parr, who was batting before "W. G." was born, and he has more recently seen cricket annexed by the Muses and made a sub-department of Parnassus. He can combine the styles, not shrinking from "the land of the kangaroo," but quoting his Virgil as is only meet and loyal in one who was so long disguised under the mask of "Tityrus." He has followed Association football from before the days of Preston's pride to the latest tourneys at Imperial Wembley. He will rattle you off a column or two of statistics before breakfast and then ask for work; but he can also write as vividly as he enjoys and, under his touch, even a column of figures is lit up like a boulevard until it twinkles in the mind.

Football has not forced the door of *belles-lettres* through which cricket passes with increasing ease and Mr. Catton has not tried to make the entrance. He is the raconteur, not the essayist, the student and critic of fact rather than the lyricist of fancy. There is much love here of goals and of the men who struggled round them and much sound sense along with the genial anecdotes of the cricket field. Old illusions are dispersed and the northern light throws new and kindly illumination on "W. G." and C. B. Fry. Just tribute follows to the genius of Maclaren, that prickly master of craft. Maclaren picked Barnes for the Australian tour of 1901-2 before the great bowler finished his first match in county cricket. Barnes, with "that surly, militant mood that sometimes seemed to possess him," is admirably described; he takes his place in a colourful company most humanly portrayed. Probably cricket is suffering at present from being over-written. But Mr. Catton is too good a lover to find sensations in sports and stunts in everything; unlike most dealers in memories he can be nicely sentimental about the past without belittling the present, and while he unburdens a warm heart he keeps a cool and critical head. There is the best of the north in the humours and the discipline of such a method.

THE MANDATORY SYSTEM

Mandates. By Freda White. Cape. 3s. 6d. net.

THE relatively few people who show any interest in the mandatory system, which places under the supervision of the League of Nations all the former German colonies and a large portion of the Turkish Empire, may be divided roughly into two classes—those who imagine the mandates system is nothing more than annexation under a different name, and those who take far too seriously the declaration that it is "a sacred trust of civilization." Miss Freda White deserves our thanks for writing a short and

popular account, based almost entirely on the reports of the Mandatory Powers to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, of the system at work, and her readers will come to the conclusion that mandated areas, while they are not governed as "a sacred trust of civilization," are assured a certain measure of justice and social development which have frequently been lacking in ordinary colonial administrations. The Mandatory Government has to produce each year a very detailed report to Geneva to show that the provisions of the Covenant for the welfare of the natives are being strictly carried out. To a limited degree the mandatory system does institute international government over the more backward peoples of the world, although the League procedure makes it clear to these peoples that they must consider themselves loyal subjects of the Mandatory Power and should not, therefore, seek to abuse their privilege of appeal to the League.

'Mandates' is published "under the auspices of the League of Nations Union" and is therefore presumably intended to show how much has been achieved in this branch of the League's work. Had Miss White been a little more explicit in her account of the origins of the mandatory system she would have been able to show that the League's achievement is even more considerable than the reader of her book might conclude. The French difficulties in Syria, for example, are to a great extent due to the fact that, by secret treaties during the war, we had promised the greater part of this territory both to the French and to the Arabs. Private bargainings of this sort have naturally complicated the task of the Mandatory Powers, but on the whole the system itself has worked, possibly even in Syria, better than might have been expected. For the bombardment of Damascus the French have had to put up with an examination, by the international experts who form the Mandates Commission, far more severe and thorough than any that could conceivably have been instituted against a sovereign Power before the war. Again, in the case of the Bondelzwart Rebellion in South-west Africa, the publicity given to the League inquiry was such that no Government which valued its reputation would incur the possibility of its repetition.

Miss White's book is not entirely free from minor inaccuracies, nor from hints of that sentimentality which has done so much harm to the League of Nations; but she has studied her subject with care and sympathy and has managed to compress a great deal of fascinating information into a volume of under two hundred pages.

A MAN OF MYSTERY

The Parnell of Real Life. By William O'Brien. Fisher Unwin. 7s. 6d. net.

MANY intriguing characters have traversed the stage of Irish political life from the days of the great Earl of Kildare to those of Erskine Childers and Michael Collins. But in its mysterious mingling of charm with repulsiveness, of cold indifference with fiery passion, of romance with a shrewd ability to grasp the essential factors in a political situation, no personality that ever trod the Irish political stage has equalled, much less rivalled, that of Charles Stuart Parnell.

So enigmatic a personality was bound to attract the attention and provoke the pens of both political biographers and literary portraitists. The wonder indeed is that it has so far attracted so few; and to the wonder must be added an expression of regret that this should be so when year by year the ranks of those to whom Parnell was something more than a name become thinner. It is therefore cause for rejoicing that Mr. O'Brien, provoked by Mr. St. John Ervine's 'Parnell,' and free from the disadvantage of Mr. Ervine's "profound unacquaintance with his original in which

he need yield to no man," should have taken up his pen to limn for his readers the features of the man who trusted him more fully than he trusted any other man. Yet so evanescent, so elusive was Parnell's personality, that it escapes even sympathetic delineation by Mr. O'Brien. As the last page of Mr. O'Brien's book is turned the impression of his subject left upon the reader's mind is that of almost terrible isolation. Something in Parnell's "make-up" so distinguished him from his fellow men that in effect it completely cut him off from all normal intercourse with them. Inspired with a passion to right Ireland's wrongs Parnell was gradually consumed by his own passion. If realization of his desires had been granted him, it would have turned to dust and ashes in the very act. For Mr. O'Brien, intentionally or otherwise, reveals Parnell as inspired by an eternal dissatisfaction with things as they were—a dissatisfaction having its source, doubtless, in ill-health.

POSTHUMOUS MEMOIRS

Rambles and Reflections. By A. C. Benson. Murray. 10s. 6d. net.

ONE virtue at least must be attributed to the late Dr. Benson—the virtue of industry. Therein, indeed, lay his chief limitation as a writer. Had he written less he would have written more effectively; for though essentially a man with a reflective bent of mind, he never allowed himself time for his reflections to take proper and permanent shape. He became instead a sort of journalist of the emotions. Every passing mood must be seized and set down without delay, and in whatever words suggested themselves at the time. He had a genuine instinct for beauty, but in his attempts to convey it, effort too frequently outran achievement. He was a recorder rather than an interpreter. For this reason it is that such a book as 'Leaves of the Tree' outweighs in value all the many volumes of desultory essays, which proceeded with a well-calculated regularity from his pen. It is a permanent contribution to the best biographical literature of our time. Similarly, in this volume the best papers are those which deal with actual men and women—though an exception must be made in the case of the brief essay on Cornwall, in which the writer has indeed caught something of the secret of that mysterious and magical county. There is but little humour in these pages, yet the following account of a visit to Henry James at Lamb House, Rye, is worthy of preservation:

A dog-cart approached swinging bumpingly along, gingerly guided by a roseate parson. "Look out for Mr. James Bryce," murmured Henry James to me in swift-guarded tones. The dog-cart was checked. "Ah, Mr. James, good morning. Seen our friend James Bryce lately?" "Not very lately." "Well, you will recall me to him when you meet!" "Naturally—indeed inevitably." The worthy priest passed on. "There," said Henry James, "an excellent man, but the tenuity of human resources! I am inextricably bound up in that good fellow's mind with James Bryce—with whom my acquaintance is of the slenderest—and invariably thus interrogated; but after all, what a comfort when one's friends strike the hour punctually!"

'Rambles and Reflections' shows no declension from the standard of its predecessors, nor does it exhibit any improvement thereon. Dr. Benson was one of the most static writers of his period, and if he aimed at the elimination of the unexpected from his work he succeeded in full measure. Each of his books aspired to be, to some extent, a commentary on life. Yet it would be difficult to define his attitude to the deeper problems of existence. His religion—like that of so many Englishmen—appears to have taken the form of a compromise. There are indications that he desired to be regarded as an independent thinker, but he was never able to forget that his father was an Archbishop of Canterbury. There are certain unexact-moods in which one is prepared to find him an agreeable companion, for though he rarely attained to the heights of inspiration, he never lapsed into the merely commonplace.

NEW FICTION

By L. P. HARTLEY

A Peakland Faggot. By R. Murray Gilchrist. Faber and Gwyer. 8s. 6d. net.

The Pool. By Anthony Bertram. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d. net.

Minnie Flynn. The Story of a Film Star. By Frances Marion. Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d. net.

A SHORT story can scarcely help being a *tour de force*. It must be artificially composed; it must, to some extent, be arranged for effect. With a few modifications, a slice taken out of life will make a tolerably good novel: the quality of the work, if fine enough, will make itself felt increasingly as the book proceeds and atone for clumsy construction. The novelist can afford digressions, can afford to work away at one corner of the picture while leaving the rest merely touched in. He is not independent of form, but the illusion he gradually creates, the imaginary world he presents to us, provides a medium which can deputize for form; and his work is impregnated by this medium. It has a unity derived from the writer's own personality, from the recognizable idiom of his thought. Reading a novel is like going a long journey with one companion: one sees many countries and uses many different means of conveyance, but the whole trip gains cohesion and significance from the fact that it has been shared by a friend. But the short-story writer is not a friend, he is simply an acquaintance, a stranger who whiles away an hour in the train. We cannot get to know him well, and should he try to force his personality upon us we resent it; we value him, if at all, for what he tells us, not for what he is; he has no background



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in our lives, no context, and unless he is impersonally interesting and amusing he is apt to be a bore.

Robert Murray Gilchrist, who was born in 1868 and died in 1917, had an almost ideal temperament for a short-story writer. He had, or seems to have had, no axes to grind; he was a man of wide sympathies and acute observation and, like so many Victorians, he was able to see the disagreeable side of life without being unduly disturbed by it. And conversely, thanks to this robust temperament, when he wanted to give his stories a "happy ending" (at least two-thirds of them end happily) he finished them, without shame, on a note that is cheerful and yet neither forced nor false. He believed that terminations could be happy as well as sad. His material is, in a sense, monotonous; he describes Derbyshire peasants and Derbyshire peasants only. The stories are all short and sometimes they are slight. But, "in small proportions we just beauties see," and it is the justice and sanity of his vision which distinguish Gilchrist's stories. Many brilliant short-story writers (Katharine Mansfield among them) can obtain sharper effects than Gilchrist does, but often at the cost of losing their mental footing. They fix their eye upon cruelty or some other disagreeable manifestation of human nature and must have a tilt at it; over goes the object indeed, but in the onslaught the writer also overbalances. After one or two such displays we learn to recognize the crusader beneath the artist: this one thinks that parents are unkind to children; that one that children are unkind to parents. We know that the appearance of a child or parent will be the signal for an outburst of unfairness. But Gilchrist was aware that the short-story writer walks a tight-rope and cannot indulge in violent gestures. Mr. Phillpotts, in an admirable preface, has compared him with Turgenev. This is saying too much. That fine flower of emotion which is to be found everywhere in Turgenev's work does not grow in Gilchrist's garden. But the comparison is a just indication of the scope and direction, if not of the intensity, of his work.

'The Pool' is a first novel of great power and originality. The scene is laid in the East End of London. Rosie Betts is the queen of Rotherhithe, adored by her friends, dreaded by her enemies. Her quick sharp Cockney tongue keeps them all in awe. "Ain't jew like the Prince?" is the sarcastic formula by which she repels the advances of her admirers when they become too "fresh." She flirts with them but she will stand no nonsense from any of them. She is, she feels, different; she has a fund of pride and self-respect which sets her apart from the other young women of the district. Mr. Bertram sets out to show us how this pride was humbled. The gradual loss of self-respect, one of Conrad's favourite themes, is perhaps the most painful subject in fiction; and in Mr. Bertram's hands it loses nothing of its painfulness. Seduced when drunk by the despicable Sid Parker, Rosie is faced with the double problem of concealing the fact that she is going to have a child and, when it is born, of concealing the child itself. She carries the matter through with a high hand; throughout she contrives to see herself as the injured party. But her pride is streaked with defiance; her nature is hardened; her high spirits have gone and in their place has come an insane resolve that her child must be brought up for the attainment of one end: to kill his father. Without ever stating it, Mr. Bertram has indicated with great skill the slow sapping of a fine nature, the unconscious process by which the gay, buoyant Rosie Betts of the coffee-stall becomes the desperate haunted woman who sees in the oozy pool of Rotherhithe a symbolical affinity with her tortured mind. Very convincing, too, is the whole account of the dock-side slum, its twilight atmosphere, its garish joys and stony hopeless sorrows. Its effect is conveyed by means of slight, subtle strokes; there is none of that agglomeration of detail by which some novelists try to describe un-

familiar surroundings. We see the slums through the eyes of the poor, not through the spectacles of the district visitor.

Mr. Bertram writes with simplicity and restraint, never trying to force his tone. In consequence of this reticence there is a flatness in certain passages; and the dialogue, though spirited and true to type, lacks fertility and picturesqueness of repartee. It is almost too life-like. Back-chat is apt to be wearisome, and Mr. Bertram gives us little else. The motives of the characters, oddly enough, are less convincing than the characters themselves. Granted that Rosie was a crude creature of limited self-consciousness, incapable of self-analysis, still her motive in clinging so passionately to virginity might be made clearer than it is. The impressive thing about the book is the certainty with which Mr. Bertram controls the wider issues of his narrative. The story moves of itself, with a strong, inevitable rhythm, a movement greater and more important than the sum of the currents of uneasy life which go to compose it. 'The Pool' is that rare thing, a novel with a shape; and Mr. Bertram has proved himself a novelist who, with a gift for detail, can put detail in its place and make it serve a larger end.

'Minnie Flynn' is a long, brilliant, hectic and exceedingly depressing book. It traces the life of a film star, a stupid kind-hearted woman, from small beginnings to sudden fame and back to obscurity again. Miss Marion clearly knows what she is writing about; and she writes with a fierce vividness, turning a spotlight upon everything she sees and every emotion she describes. Glaring as her picture is, it is at the same time a very dark one. Almost all the characters are outrageous; they have no background, no shadows even; no shame, no delicacy, no decency, nothing but a kind of vivid drugged life. But for its tremendous zest and gusto the book would be barely readable, so factitious and worthless are the emotions it describes. 'Minnie Flynn' is first and foremost a tract: but it has æsthetic vitality too, and can be recommended to anyone with a strong moral stomach.

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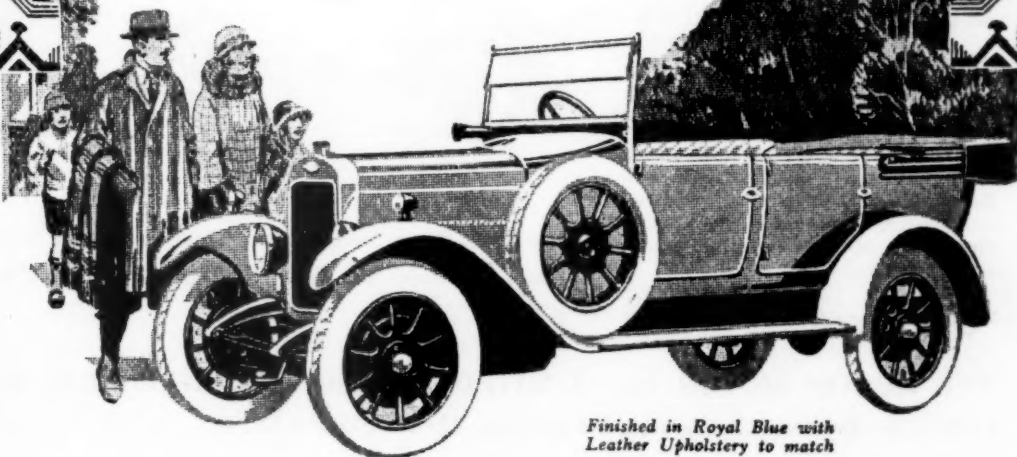
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MOTORING

AMERICAN DESIGN

BY H. THORNTON RUTTER

SIR WILLIAM LETTS, President of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, recently visited the U.S.A., where he criticized several phases of American motor vehicle design and predicted that a drastic change is imminent in the character of American light cars. Sir William, in an interview which he gave to the Press, admitted that mass production in America had given the world a valuable lesson in efficient industrial operation, but stated that it had been done at a sacrifice to the product. It has allowed European engineers to run away with what it now needs most—greater car efficiency and new body and mechanical design.

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Consciousness of this has been growing among the more far-sighted in the industry and plans are being developed in the U.S.A. to correct the deficiency. He explained that he did not expect the European type of car to be reproduced in that country as he knew that it would not suit American requirements. He looked rather for a wholly new type of motor embodying the best principles of English and American motor cars. Under mass production the price has been cut but the cars have suffered. They are dependable and many of them are strikingly handsome, but there is a woeful lack of individuality not so much in body design as in mechanical parts. With few exceptions the cars of

America are propelled by uniform types of engines which he frankly stated are not so highly developed as the European engines. This is equally true with regard to the other moving parts. The American motorists as a result pay a higher operating cost on every mile than do Europeans.

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English designers have had to bear in mind two factors: high costs of fuel and a high rate of motor taxation. Their problem has been to develop engines of great efficiency in fuel consumption with a minimum piston displacement which would be capable of developing great road speed to meet the European love of road racing—a form of diversion which has been dropped in America and replaced by track racing. Naturally, to gain their object, an economical fast car, they have had to sacrifice certain things which Americans, with their passion for personal comfort, would not tolerate. The European does not expect and does not get in his automobile a car that will permit him to run from two to sixty miles an hour without changing gears. He takes it as a matter of course that when he slows down he must go through the gear box, and the idea of driving up a long hill without changing his gears if the speed falls below a certain point never occurs to him.

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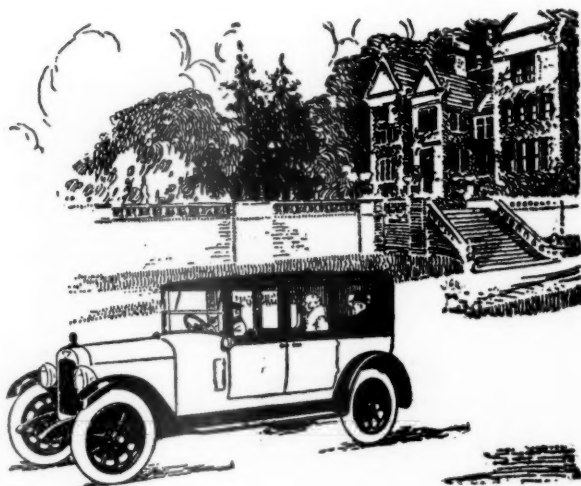
To achieve flexibility American engineers have depended on horse-power, while the European engineer devoted his attention to torque. This may be expressed untechnically as the pulling

The Austin TWENTY

"Carlton" Saloon
£595 at Works

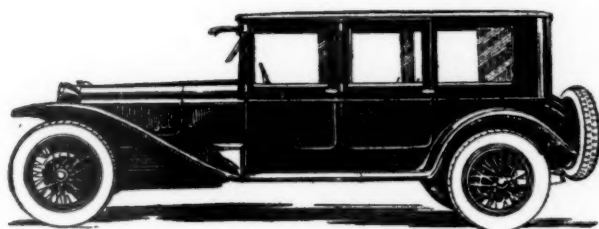
THE "Carlton" Saloon provides comfortable accommodation for six persons, four wide doors affording easy entrance and exit. Adjustable front seats, Leather or Bedford Cord upholstery, big window space giving clear vision almost all around. Fully equipped and excellently finished.

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*However laudatory our remarks may be on this remarkable Car—
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Its many possessions include unique and perfect springing, phenomenal acceleration, hill climbing capabilities, and speed on the level
combined with wonderful road holding and controllability.*

14/60 H.P. 13.9 R.A.C.

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power at the wheels at low speed with minimum fuel expenditure. European motors have changed more rapidly and are to-day more refined and more efficient than any of the American products. Sir William Letts's view was that the European car is hand built while the American car is machine built. The former he thought on the whole is a better car from a mechanical standpoint and will outlast the average American car. The new type of American car will probably be a ten-year car.

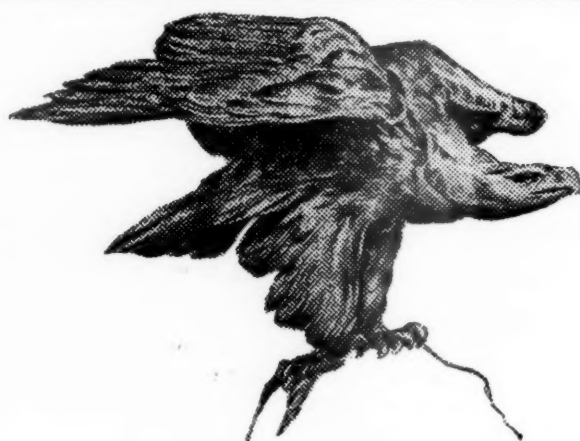
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In propounding his views Sir W. Letts stated that British bodies will not do in America, but on the other hand American coachwork with only slight modifications will pass in Great Britain and for Europe. The length of the U.S.A. cars is a bit too much for England and he thought that if the States were to make a really serious effort to capture the European market the American manufacturer would compromise on length.

As for the new type of U.S.A. car he thought it would incorporate economy of operation in fuel to a large degree without sacrifice of horse-power and with the added advantage of torque. That will mean the same freedom from excessive gear changing that the Americans have enjoyed for so long. The engine will be better built and will contain refinements not hitherto thought possible in mass production. The car will be sturdier and better suited to all purposes. It will be set lower to the ground as the roads of America to-day do not necessitate such high axle clearance as in years gone by, and it will be equipped with brakes on all wheels to conform with the growing demand for safety. Such a car will probably sell for about six hundred and fifty to seven hundred and fifty dollars.

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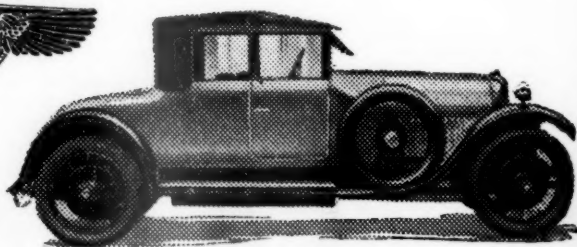
Such was Sir William's concluding statement and it is interesting to note that he foretells the production in America of smaller and lighter cars, due no doubt to the same causes that have evolved them in Europe, namely, better roads and the need for economical cars.



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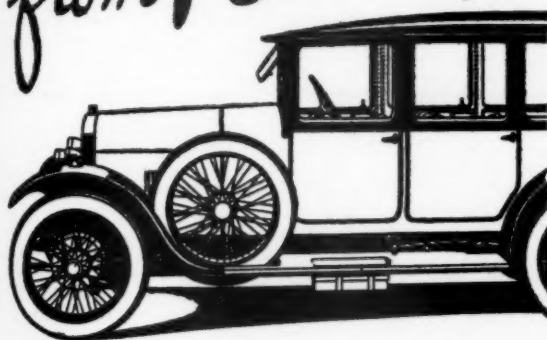
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SHORTER NOTICES

The Menace of Nationalism in Education. By J. F. Scott. Allen and Unwin. 6s. 6d. net.

IN this fresh and entertaining volume Dr. Scott records some studies which he has been making of British and Continental history books. He studies crucial international conflicts, such as the Hundred Years' War, the American War of Independence, and the Franco-Prussian War, to find how each national historian tells the story to children in schools. The results are illuminating and are made more effective by Dr. Scott's evident desire to record the work of the "impartial" historian where such exists. His information shows, however, that with few exceptions school history books have a strong nationalist bias. A French textbook discovers Pitt to be a far more sinister figure than Napoleon: "Pitt, irreconcilable enemy of the French Revolution and of France, desired war, war! No man did more evil to Europe than Pitt." A German textbook records that America entered the war to safeguard her securities in the Allied countries. An English textbook makes the American colonists the sole villains of the War of Independence, and England a wronged country faced with treacherous rebellion.

Dr. Scott's commentary upon this material is not so comprehensive as one might have wished. His suggestion that all history textbooks should be submitted to that committee of the League of Nations which goes by the rather grandiose title of the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation has been attempted, but proved eminently unsuccessful. Historians when they disagree are apt to become heated, and none of the nationalist textbook writers liked to see their work changed. The nationalist attitude in history has possibly less propaganda in it than Dr. Scott imagines. It is an honest but limited view; its supporters are difficult to convince. More can be done by Dr. Scott's own method of giving publicity in a single volume to widely divergent nationalist versions and disclosing their inconsistencies. This volume should interest others than educationists, and one would welcome a supplementary treatment of the same theme with wider application. Possibly Dr. Scott might investigate American textbooks; the present writer recently examined some school textbooks in the Middle West in which pictures were shown of Germans blowing up hospitals. For the moment a fruitful line of inquiry has been indicated, and it is to be hoped that it will be duly developed.

The Limitations of Victory. By A. Fabre-Luce. Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d. net.

AMONG French writers on the World War M. Fabre-Luce holds a deservedly high position. M. Poincaré, indeed, in his *Memoirs* recently paid him the high compliment of singling out his work for special criticism. Originally published in French under the title 'La Victoire,' this book is in fact a comprehensive indictment of Poincaré's policy. As such its historical value is in some measure vitiated, for it has been written to maintain a definite thesis—that the Entente as well as Germany was guilty in provoking the World War. In M. Fabre-Luce's opinion "Germany and Austria made the gestures which rendered the war possible; the Triple Entente made those which rendered it certain." Having thus determined the responsibility for the war the author proceeds to determine the responsibility for the peace. The failure of the peace has been due to the fact of the French nation and its governors "adhering to the traditions of the war under entirely different circumstances" and also to "those of the old diplomacy." One may not always agree with M. Fabre-Luce in his criticisms; but at least it must be conceded that he has been careful to support them with an imposing array of facts gleaned from trustworthy sources.

Les Races et l'Histoire. Par Eugène Pillard. Paris. La Renaissance du Livre. 20 fr. net.

Race and History. By E. Pillard. Kegan Paul. 21s. net.

IN this new volume of the 'Evolution of Humanity' series Professor Pillard has given us a luminous conspectus of what anthropology has to tell us of the question of races from the earliest times to the present. His results, though not dogmatically stated, are quite incompatible with much of the nationalist cries of the day. There is no such thing as a Latin race, the French are not Latins at all, the Celts are not a race, and most definitely of all, there is no such thing as a Jewish race. Jews show in general the characteristics of the people among whom they live and have no common physical feature, not even the Jewish nose. The translation is on the whole up to the average; one can hardly expect the ordinary translator to have heard of Vesalius, but what were the general editor and the printer's reader doing, to allow "peninsula" (for peninsula) in text and headlines?

Charles Dickens. By George Gissing. Blackie. 2s. 6d. net.

IT is doubtful whether, in all the volumes which have been written on Dickens, Gissing's monograph has ever been surpassed. While Gissing's own tendency to a photographic realism may make him at times a little too eager to defend the Master's idealism, yet it certainly prevents him from uncritical eulogy; just as his own pessimism acts as a corrective to the universal enthusiasm for Dickens's humour. We have, that is to say, a criticism from a lover and admirer which keeps this side of sanity because of the vast temperamental divergence between critic and criticized. We are delighted, therefore, to find this book re-published in a cheap but excellent little edition.

THE MAY MAGAZINES

The *Fortnightly* opens with a proposal by "Augur" that permanent seats on the Council of the League of Nations should be abolished, and seats on the Council allotted on the basis of economic and industrial strength. Other papers explain the action of Brazil and other South American States, and the possible attitude of Germany after it has entered the League, while we are warned of the danger of economic subjection to the United States. Mr. G. M. Godden gives an account of the revolutionary agencies at work among us. Prof. Henderson continues his 'George Bernard Shaw Self-revealed,' in which we are told how his plays are conceived and written; Mr. Lionel Cust discusses 'Government Patronage of the Fine Arts,' with France as an object-lesson; while Sir Charles Russell puts forward as a possible reason for the want of intimacy between Johnson and Gibbon, the fact that Gibbon's housekeeper was Johnson's cousin. G. B. Stern gives a lively account of Budapest; and there are papers on Sea Power, India and Egypt. An eighteenth-century idea is re-hashed by Mr. George in 'Children of the Morning.'

The *National Review* in its 'Episodes' deals with Germany—Back to Bismarck, Italy and France, Washington and its preposterous claims. South Africa and the Flag, Public Waste, and Spiritualism. Mr. Maxse writes on the prospect of 'Col. House as Potential President of the United States' and Mr. Holman protests against 'English Foreign Policy' from an Australian point of view. Mr. Colvin attacks the Master of Balliol's view of Karl Marx, but forgets that the total subversion of society was the creed of the revolutionists before Marx began to write. The Vice-Provost of Eton contributes another of his delightful papers on 'Greek Poetry' with versions from the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, Hesiod, and Pindar; Capt. Russell recalls 'The Defence of the Peking Legations' in 1900; P. A. N. describes the great day of Hill 60; Gen. Burton is excellent on 'Wild Life in a Cotswold Garden' and there are other good papers on Prohibition in Finland, the New Shah, Canada, and especially on 'Country Views.'

The *London Mercury* suggests that the time has now come for the Baconians to inquire 'Did Shakespeare write Bacon?' The 'Poetry' includes verse by Messrs. A. Y. Campbell, John Freeman, Robert Graves, Herring, Stead and Davison. Miss J. K. Marsh has a fantasy on the Flight to Varennes; Mr. Pugh reprints some mad letters, Sir Sidney Lee's last article gives 'The History of Sadler's Wells'; Mr. Kermode designs some initials of which the first is a coarsened ninth-century letter; Mr. Carew analyzes the art of 'Virginia Woolf,' who is receiving much attention just now; Mr. Priestley studies the work of Mr. Joseph Hergesheimer; and Mr. Mark continues his interesting paper on 'Popular Ballads and Songs.' Among the 'Chronicles' the more notable are those by Dr. Marett, Mr. T. M. Pope, Mr. Burdett, Prince Mirsky and Mr. Powys.

The *Adelphi* opens with a paper on 'Poetry and Reality,' by Mr. Murry provoked by a rather stupid remark of Mr. Richards in a recent book. Mr. Edwin Muir writes on a German poet whose work has recently been revived after a century, Friedrich Holderlin. The Journeyman is interested by Joanna Southcott. Mr. Maude's translation of Tolstoy's 'The Devil' is completed.



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CITY NOTES

Lombard Street, Thursday

FOR the first time since 1914 the £ is over par, and the fact that it reached that position within two days of the cessation of the general strike speaks eloquently for the world's opinion of the result. It is too soon to realize fully the far reaching effect of the last fortnight, but the fear of labour troubles which has been spasmodically paralysing the industry of this country since 1919 has been dispelled, if not for all time at all events for a considerable period. Admittedly a solution has not yet been found to the coal problem, but I think that the position here will be clear in the very near future. Stock markets have naturally responded, with the result that although the volume of business has not reached great proportions, prices have materially improved. The Stock Exchange is an accurate barometer in these matters. While negotiations for a settlement of the coal question were proceeding three weeks ago, War Loan stood at 99½; this week it has touched 100½. What has happened in the interval? Apparently for a fortnight the trade of the country was at a standstill; expense has been involved, revenue has been lost, but in the City all this counts as nothing compared with the fact that the strike is now over. The subsequent settlement in the various industries displays a tendency on the part of the employee to place his trust in his employer, a state of affairs which should prove to be good for the industry of the country. The City is also elated at the knowledge that Communism in this country is to all intents and purposes non-existent.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

While our labour difficulties have been settled in so satisfactory a manner, Europe generally has been having a disquieting time. The French franc has fallen to 175, the Belgian franc has reached 174½, while the Italian lira has been varying with the inconsistency of an English summer. The German Cabinet has resigned, and there has been a *coup d'état* in Poland. The currency question in Europe is undoubtedly a serious one and I do not think we shall see a general improvement unless the lead is taken by the French Government. I have warned readers for many months of the inevitable trend of the French currency. Although it is quite possible that temporary palliatives may be employed to stem the tide, a permanent improvement cannot be expected until the French population is not merely taxed adequately, but pays the taxes imposed upon it.

KAFFIRS

Consistent strength in the Kaffir Circus has been shown of late. For some months now this division has been more or less in the shade, but aided by a steady improvement in the labour position on the Witwatersrand the industry is making good headway and optimistic views are expressed in well informed quarters regarding the next batch of half-yearly dividends. In London the demand is not yet of great dimensions, but both Paris and the Cape are consistent supporters of the better class shares. Personally I think that the improvement in Kaffirs generally has come to stay for a time. Gedulds are among my

particular favourites, while those who make "Safety first" their watchword should include Rand Mines, Johannesburg Consolidateds and Union Corporations among their selections. The last-mentioned I consider very attractive at the present price to hold for both dividends and capital appreciation.

TRUNK STOCKS

From Ottawa comes the interesting statement that the Canadian Government contemplates asking Parliament to pass legislation empowering it to negotiate with British holders of bonds in the Grand Trunk Railway Company and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company in order to effect some amicable settlement of their claims in regard to interest payments and equity. Parliament, it is added, is not likely to undertake any legislation this session in respect of the readjustment of the whole financial structure of the Canadian National Railway Company with the object of placing the finances on a sound permanent basis. It is understood, however, that proposals will be made next session with this object in view, the idea being to mark down the capital indebtedness and possibly wipe out the whole amount now owed to the Government on bond interest and accrued interest. This intimation is not official, but is stated to be made on "reliable authority." There certainly seem to be interesting possibilities.

EAGLE STAR AND BRITISH DOMINIONS

Sir Edward M. Mountain had a satisfactory statement to make in regard to the progress of the Eagle Star and British Dominions Insurance Co., Ltd., during the past year, at the annual meeting last week. The premium income now stands at the figure of £3,873,987, the assets exceed £20,000,000 (an increase of over £880,000 on the previous year's figures) while at the same time the expenses have been considerably reduced. In the Life Department, which is one of the most successful of the Company's activities, the Directors were able to declare record bonuses in the two Closed Funds of the "Eagle" and "English and Scottish" and further, to transfer a balance of £85,913 to the credit of the Profit and Loss Account. Among the new Insurance Schemes which the Company is putting on the market is one to provide facilities whereby parents, by the payment of a small cash sum each term with school fees, can insure the continuance of the child's education in the event of the death of the parent or guardian. Such a scheme fulfils a long felt want and should meet with ready support from large sections of the community.

AN ILL WIND

Readers are already conversant with my views regarding Dunlops, and those who purchased when I emphasized their attractions as an investment of the class will have little fault to find. Recent events have, of course, greatly improved the prospects of this and similar companies. Indeed a glance at the street traffic during the past two weeks has afforded ample indication as to how manufacturers of tyres, motors and bicycles were benefiting by what the railway companies were losing. After an initial set-back to about 22s. Dunlops have steadily advanced to 26s. 1½d. In my opinion there is scope for a material improvement upon this figure during the next few months.

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ACROSTICS

To allow increased space for Answers to Correspondents, the Rules for Acrostic Competition are on occasion omitted. They will, however, always appear at least once a month.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 218

Last of the 15th Quarter

THUS CALL OR CALLED WE IN AN EARLIER DAY

THE LIGHTS THAT LEAD POOR WANDERERS ASTRAY.

1. Three-fifths of that which rich and rare men deem.
2. The core of what cheats dwellers in the stream.
3. Basis of Britain's wealth and world-wide power.
4. Found in the fruit, but never in the flower.
5. "The sea-blue bird of March" this place will suit.
6. Next from Japan we must purloin a fruit.
7. Distress. Curtail it—Aaron's rod agen!
8. See here a draught to banish care from men.
9. The frost I vanquished, now your brooks I fill.
10. Lop at both ends an ancient game of skill;
11. But this unclipt will serve you for a night.
12. And this being quaffed, you may exclaim "Good night!"

Solution of Acrostic No. 216

R	o	Ck	1 The Uvula hangs over the root of the
U	ug	H	tongue.
O	vul	A ¹	2 Lives in marshes and feeds on worms
G	odwi	T ²	and insects.
E	xperienc	E ³	3 "Men of any worth soon recognise that
T	e	A ⁴	the fruit of life is experience, not happi-
D		Uchess	ness, and are content to exchange hope
E	l	Ba	for insight."
L	ammergeie	R ⁵	Schopenhauer, <i>Counsels and Maxims</i>
I	ndr	Is	4 "The cups that cheer, but not inebriate."
S	ultan	A	Cowper, <i>The Task</i> .
L	eviatha	N ⁶	5 The largest European bird of prey.
E	mbattle	D ⁷	6 Job xli. 1.

7 By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

Emerson, *Concord Hymn*.

ACROSTIC No. 217.—The winner is Mr. E. P. Trendell, 24 Dene Road, Guildford, who has selected as his prize 'The Fugger News-Letters, Second Series,' published at The Bodley Head, and reviewed in our columns on May 1.

ALSO CORRECT.—Novocrete.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Baitho. All others more.

BAITHO, LILIAN, GAV.—"Bouilli" and "Night-watchman" were accepted.

The strike seriously interfered with the arrival of solutions to Acrostic No. 217.

ACROSTIC No. 218.—The winner is Mrs. V. Cooper, 17 Chatsworth Road, East Croydon, who has selected as her prize 'The Private Life of Helen of Troy,' by John Erskine, published by Nash and Grayson, and reviewed in our columns on April 24 under the head of 'New Fiction.' Eleven other competitors chose this book, twelve named 'Mrs. Delany,' eight 'A Short History of Mediæval Christendom,' etc., etc.

ALSO CORRECT.—Baitho, Baldersby, Beechworth, Carlton, Ceyx, Dolmar, Doric, East Sheen, Gay, Lilian, Margaret, Met, Sisyphus, Strucco, N. O. Sellam, Peter, Hon. R. G. Talbot, Mrs. Gordon Touche, Tyro, Varach, C. J. Warden, and Zyk.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Barberry, Boskerris, Mrs. J. Butler, J. Chambers, Dhualt, Dodeka, Dolmar, Reginald Eccles, Farsdon, Lieut.-Col. Sir Wolseley Haig, Reginald Hope, Madge, Martha, Lady Mottram, Novocrete, St. Ives, H. M. Vaughan, Vron, Mrs. V. G. Wilson, and Yendu. All others more.

OUR FIFTEENTH QUARTERLY COMPETITION.—After the Eleventh Round the leaders are: Gay; Baitho, Carlton, Lilian; Doric, Margaret; Novocrete, Peter; St. Ives.

ACROSTIC No. 215.—The winner is Mr. A. de V. Blathwayt, Bath and County Club, Bath, who has selected as his prize 'A Tibetan on Tibet,' by G. A. Combe, published by Fisher Unwin and reviewed in our columns on April 17. Thirty-one other competitors chose this book, thirty-six named 'Odtas,' etc., etc.

ALSO CORRECT.—Armadales, Baitho, Carlton, Cygnet, Dhualt, Farsdon, Daphne Gladstone, F. L. Groves, H. F. R. W. Haig, Lieut.-Col. Sir Wolseley Haig, Lar, Martha, G. W. Miller, Lady Mottram, Peter, Quis, Stanfield, Hon. R. G. Talbot, H. M. Vaughan, J.V.

ONE LIGHT WRONG.—Baldersby, Barberry, Bolo, W. F. Born, Boskerris, Brevis, C. H. Burton, Mrs. J. Butler, Cameron, C. A. S., J. Chambers, A. R. N. Cowper-Coles, Maud Crowther, Crucible, Dodeka, Doric, East Sheen, Estela, Cyril E. Ford, G. M. Fowler, Fra, Gay, Iago, Jeff, Gladys P. Lamont, Lilian, Mrs. A. Lole, Ruby Macpherson, Madge, Margaret, Met, Mrs. W. H. Myers, N. O. Sellam, Novocrete, Oakapple, G. K. Paley, Parvus, F. M. Petty, Plumbago, Miss C. Search, Sisyphus, Still Waters, St. Ives, M. Story, Strucco, Tyro, Varach, C. J. Warden, Yewden, Zyk. All others more.

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SUCCESSFUL YEAR'S OPERATIONS EDUCATION INSURANCE SCHEME

Presiding at the ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of the Eagle Star and British Dominions Insurance Co., Ltd., held on Thursday, May 13, Sir Edward M. Mountain, Bart. (chairman), in moving the adoption of the report and accounts, said that the year under review had been one of consolidation and progress. In the life department new policies numbering 3,038 were issued for sums assured of £1,344,148 gross, of which £55,400 were re-assured. Practically the whole of the life business, which continued to show steady progress, was obtained in this country. At the end of 1925 two of their closed funds, namely, the "Eagle" and "English and Scottish," were actuarially valued for the purpose of bonus distribution, with the result that the surplus was sufficient in the case of the "Eagle" to permit the payment of a simple reversionary bonus of 6 per cent. per annum for the five years, and in the case of the "English and Scottish" a compound reversionary bonus at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum for the same period. As a result of the year's operations, a profit of £85,913 was transferred to the profit and loss account.

During the year the directors were invited to provide facilities whereby parents, by paying a small sum each term with school fees, could insure the continuance of the child's education in the event of the death of the parent. Their actuaries devised a scheme of group insurance on very simple lines, and already some important schools had effected policies under this scheme. A group scheme, however, involved the co-operation of both the school and the parents, and this was not always practicable. The directors were, therefore, offering an alternative scheme to individual parents. Both these schemes fulfilled a very real want, as shown by the large number of letters received on the subject. Full particulars of either scheme could be obtained from the company's head office or any of their branches or agents.

Having reviewed the progress of the company's business during the past year in the various departments, fire, accident, employers' liability and marine—from which, with the exception of employers' liability, substantial profits, amounting to £74,822, had been transferred to profit and loss account—the Chairman stated that, after providing for the final dividends on the various classes of shares payable in respect of 1925, absorbing £41,763, there was a balance to be carried forward of £34,221, as compared with £20,465 at the end of 1924.

The premium income of the company reached last year the magnificent figure of £3,873,987, an increase of £66,991 over the previous twelve months. The assets, as shown in the balance sheet, amounted to £20,627,460, or an increase over the previous year of £880,221. It would be thus seen that the security offered to the policy holders was amongst the highest of any insurance company in any part of the world. Their total of reserves over all departments, excluding life and without counting their paid-up capital, was over 100 per cent. of the premium income, and if the paid-up capital were included it stood at 140 per cent. With the clearing of the industrial situation, he thought shareholders could look forward to increased prosperity in the future.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

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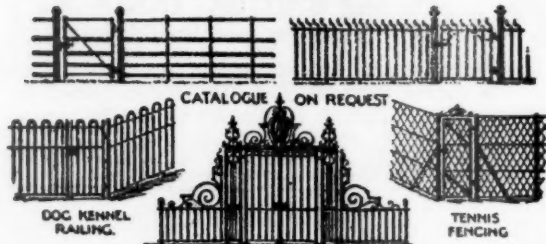
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